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PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS FOR GREEN LIVING

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Spring, No 165
Sept-October 2013
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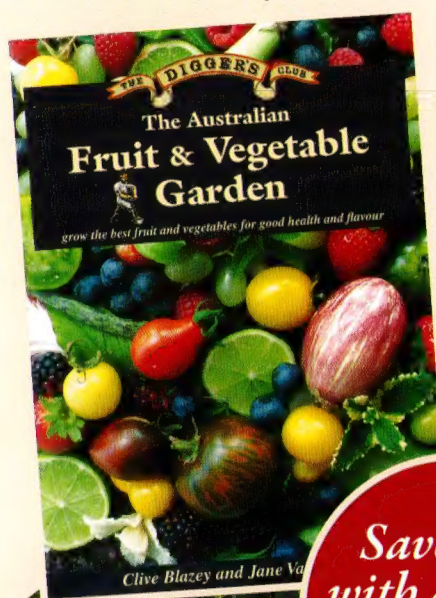


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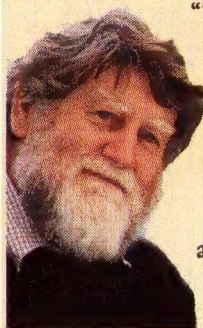
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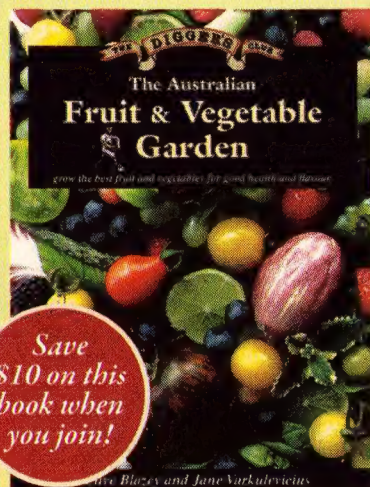
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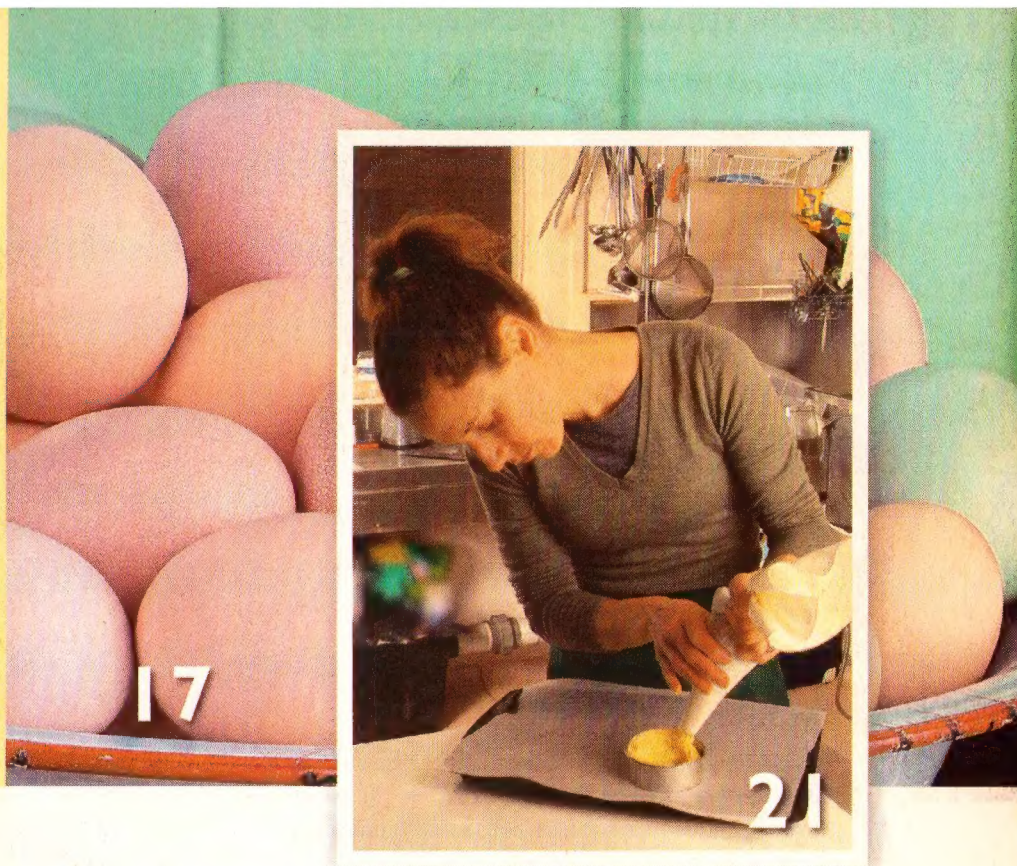
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EG 165

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Earth Garden

PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS FOR GREEN LIVING

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Founded by Keith & Irene
Smith, 1972

FRONT COVER: Juicy, organic cucumbers! Bec Schofield of Margaret River in WA, shows off a couple of the healthy cucumbers she harvested just minutes before from the Broome vegie patch of *Earth Garden* publishers, Alan and Judith Gray.

ECOTAX: this issue's EcoTax will go to NARG — the Native Animal Rescue Group (www.narg.asn.au) for their work in saving native wildlife. See Jackie French's photos of Phil the wombat on page 43 for more details.



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Earth Garden is Australia's original journal of sustainable living and alternatives. It is a forum of practical ideas, shared knowledge, sources and a guide to alternatives to high-consumption lifestyles. It's about putting a roof over your head, growing your own food organically, aiming for appropriate, renewable home energy systems and surviving — and thriving — in the city or the bush, with the inner changes which follow when you're in harmony with Nature.

EcoTax: each issue we donate a portion of the cover price to a community group involved in conservation or social justice projects to help balance the use of the paper used for printing *Earth Garden*.

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Contributions to *Earth Garden* are welcome: sharing information and experiences with other readers strengthens the network of Earth Gardeners. Photos and sketches are important. Please send us good-quality digital photos with your written contribution, either on a disk/CD, or by email to: editorial@earthgarden.com.au. Please write first with your story idea. Subscribers are sustainers: for subscription details see page 96.

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The Earth Garden Path is our fab readers' portal for sharing news, stories, photos, recipes, jokes, and information about sustainable living, now with over 2500 members.

Visit www.earthgarden.com.au/portal/news.php

UNDER THE MULBERRY TREE



Dear readers,

Welcome to the spring issue of *Earth Garden*. It's been a time of big change at Earth Garden as our Office Manager of 23 years, Karen Sandow, has decided to move on to greener pastures! Karen put in so many years of dedicated hard work, and many readers and contributors to EG have had contact with Karen over the years. Whether it's backpacking around Europe, building her own dressage ring at home, or pottering in the garden — we're sure Karen will put in the same effort and application she's always put in at EG, and we all wish her well in the future.

The end of an era brings new ideas and the staff changes at EG herald some new ways of doing things. Stay tuned — probably by the time we publish the summer issue of EG we'll be able to announce an exciting new way for readers to be in touch with us. I'm hopeless at keeping secrets so I shall say No More for fear of giving the game way before we can organise things. Really, it's because I have a longstanding rule with my kids of *never* promising them a big treat until I'm *certain* I can deliver. Enough said!

So what have you got planned for this spring? A building project? A new vegie patch? Getting some chooks? Building a wood-fired oven perhaps? An eco-friendly house renovation? Or maybe building a whole new home from scratch? Whatever you've got planned there'll be something in this issue to help you along the *Earth Garden* path.

One of the big projects in our own back yard this year has been completing our 'roadhouse'. This is the shower/laundry/outside loo we decided to build to help out all our mates who camp in our garden over the Dry Season. It takes the pressure off the bathroom and laundry in our house, and it means guests have far more freedom when staying here. Our roadhouse is made of recycled mini-orb, recycled colourbond, a large highway sign we found at the tip forms part of the back wall lining, and friends gave us excess mirrors, basins, and showerheads. We used Ecodeck flooring: it's a bamboo/recycled PET bottle composite that suits our Kimberley climate really well.

We often end up with people camped in the tipi, and two or three vegie-oil powered house trucks dotted around the vegie garden. Our dear friends who live with us part of the year can now enjoy the roadhouse, and these days I often think of our house as more like a railway station than a house — I'm never quite sure who's camped in the back garden and who's around for dinner. We sometimes meet at night around a campfire or the back deck to share either a meal or some songs on guitar, banjo, and mandolin.

And our pizza oven just keeps cranking up time after time, although the local creek clay we used for the 'hot face' may have had a bit much salt in it — it's started to drop away in little slabs, and our best efforts with *ciment fondu* patches haven't entirely worked. Harry is threatening to rebuild it in brick but I'm quite fond of our local materials: the clay combined with ant capping from a dead termite mound, so I'm not keen to give it the thumbs down just yet. What I really need to do is to consult the oracle: Alan Watt, the undisputed leader in the world of all things to do with wood-fired ovens.

At the moment we are at the peak of Dry Season vegie production. Everything seems to be ripening in great abundance, and we exhort whoever visits to take home armloads of wombok, basil, rocket, tomatoes, beans and more. We're now harvesting ripe cherry tomatoes. The Tropic tomatoes that grow on the homemade bamboo frame you can see in the background of the front cover, are large and green

and close to ripening. Our dear friend, Bec Schofield, on the cover of this issue, is one of the vegie-oil house truckies whose family sometimes lives in our garden. She was alarmed that I wanted to use this picture of her on the front cover but relented under heavy pressure. Bec, her husband Dave, plus Kamali, Ginny, and others all pitch in and help with the weeding and harvesting, so we are very lucky to have such a helpful team of truck fairies at the bottom of the garden.

The next daydream Judith and I have in mind is building a tiny Balinese

rice farmer's hut in the middle of our vegie patch. Our friend Wade mightn't know it yet, but late one night I plan to raid his giant bamboo patch with the little battery-powered chainsaw Bruce Hedge told us all about in his *Permaculture Hindsight* column last year. A little hut just big enough for one double mattress, or four cushions, would be a lovely spot to sit with a cup of tea while surveying the vegie garden. And it might even double as overflow accommodation for all the kids' mates who end up here for sleepovers. Although often I come out in the morning to find that Woody has slept in a swag by the campfire, or on a day bed on the deck, so we probably don't need any more excuses to build the rice farmer's hut.

I hope the projects, advice and ideas in our latest issue help you spring into life with great gusto, enthusiasm and joy — there are so many great ways to enjoy an EG lifestyle while helping to heal Mother Earth — the combination can be a wonderful way to remind ourselves how lucky we are. Happy reading,



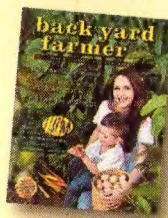
Judith at work in our vegie garden last month preparing another bed for Asian greens.

EARTH PEOPLE WRITE



'Earth PeopleWrite' is an open forum. The views expressed in letters from readers do not necessarily reflect the opinions of *Earth Garden*. Letters are always welcome, but please keep them concise.

Here at *Earth Garden* HQ we love to hear from readers. Write in and you could win a copy of *Back Yard Farmer* Number 11. Email: editorial@earthgarden.com.au or post letters to PO Box 2, Trentham, Vic, 3458.



**TOP
PICK**

NEW USE FOR LOOSE TULLE

Dear Editor,

I was encouraged by the article in *Earth Garden* June–August 2013 (EG164) about protecting fruit by the use of net bags, to write about my use of net bags. I buy cheap nylon tulle and make it into net bags — size about 25x30 cm, open at the top.

I carry these in my shopping kit and use them in the supermarket and fruit shop to bag produce. The benefits: they are very cheap and long lasting; they can be used and re-used and are machine washable; they remove the need to use plastic bags and produce no landfill; fruits that need washing, such as grapes, can be rinsed in the bag and the bag hung out to dry; they weigh no more than a plastic bag and stuff is quite visible in them.

Josie Gregory

Tasmania. Some time ago I wrote a letter about 'Liquid Sunshine' (EG161) and I mentioned that you could buy powdered seaweed at a reasonable price from a website that should have read newdirections.com.au not directions.com.au. Sorry about the mistake.

N Perrie, Ingleburn, NSW

SEPTIC SURVEY

Dear *Earth Garden*,

You probably get many suggestions for an article in the mag, and may I add my request to the rest.

I recently became excited when I was told by a friend that our old septic tank could be retro-fitted with a worm farm. However, because it is brick, it is unsuitable and we can't afford around \$9000 for a new set up.

So I am wondering if you could request a knowledgeable person to present a comprehensive article on the varieties and types of alternative toilet composting systems. I suppose I am lazily asking to pick someone else's brain, but I would value the knowledge of an expert in the area.

Josie Gregory

Dear Josie. Thanks very much for the great suggestion and we'll be more than happy to hear from anyone who might want to rise to the challenge. Email editorial@earthgarden.com.au for our 'Contributor Guidelines' and we'll take it from there.

— Fiona

CAN'T GET ENOUGH

Dear *Earth Garden*,

Greetings from freezing Maryborough, Victoria. I always subscribe to your *Earth Garden* and *Back Yard Farmer* publications as well as purchasing many books from you. The selection of books is terrific and well thought out and relevant to all walks of life.

I can't get enough of *Earth Garden*! It's always been a classy read. It takes a dedicated knowledgeable group to produce such an intelligent read. Many thanks for years and years of fantastic reading.

Leigh, Maryborough, VIC

NEW DIRECTIONS FOR LIQUID SUNSHINE

Hello Everyone,

My husband and I enjoy *Earth Garden* very much and get lots of good hints to put into practice. We are off to Tasmania (Mole Creek) again in May where we will tend and mulch our garden there. We are on four and a quarter acres and share it with the wallabies and possums. We do have an electric fence that keeps the fruit trees safe. However we do find evidence from time to time that they have been in.

We work in Sydney and play in



Give us
a break,
mate!

TIPS FOR BLACKBIRD MENACE

Hi,
I'm an *Earth Garden* subscriber and keen reader. I wonder if EG has any experience with tips to deter black birds? I live in East Gippsland in a semi-rural area, but not far from a main road and telephone/electricity lines (is this the way they travel to new areas?) This year for the first time we have pesky blackbirds taking up rather too much space in the garden, which is spacious and diverse. They seem to be attracted to mulched garden spaces and rearrange the mulch constantly, scattering and smothering vegetable seedlings and mucking up the garden generally. We wonder if their presence and dominant behaviour will chase away the native birds we love attracting to the garden. We have been looking for nests and think we know which nests, and eggs, are theirs, so can look out for them in the spring. Any ideas? E. roskempton@gmail.com.

Ros Kempton, Sarsfield, VIC

GUN PICKERS

Hiya,
Here's a photo of my three boys – Tommy (3), Charlie (5) and Lachy (8) with our bounty of tomatoes from 2012 – just as many eaten as picked I

think! They were grown over winter (Yes! Lots of overnight covering from frosts!) in our aquaponic system and wick beds and we are still eating the yummy sauces and preserved tomatoes from our crop!

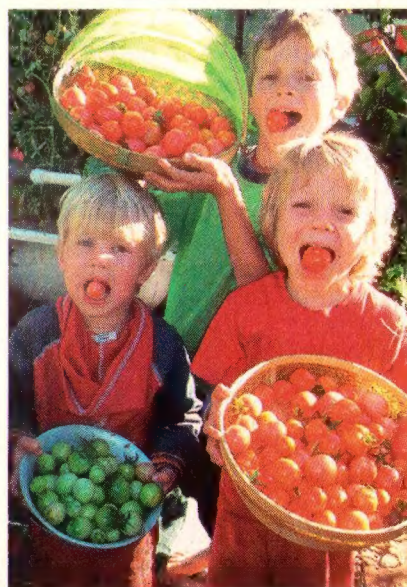
Bron Grieve, Alice Springs, NT

CIDER CATASTROPHE

Dear *Earth Garden*,

I was interested to read about making apple cider in the March-May issue.

My dad originally came from Tassie, where his parents grew apples and regularly made apple cider. When



This crew is a match for any tomato plot.

he retired, he moved to a house where there was an apple tree, so he decided to make apple cider. He made several successful batches, but it was the last attempt that was a disaster. (It has got to be Irish, doesn't it? His name was O'Reilly!)

So he put the latest batch in the shed, where the Dachsund dog slept. During one night the whole batch exploded! The dog was found in the morning, drunk, staggering around and tripping over her long ears. My perfectionist step-mum was so upset. For one thing the mess and the smell, and the other for the dog. She said later: "I've never seen a drunk dog before or since!"

The dog must have liked the taste, so it must have been a good batch! My dad was banned for life from making any more apple cider, and he was in the doghouse for some time. The shed reeked for weeks of yeast and rotting apples.

Helen Nicholls, Whyalla Norrie, SA

MYSTERIOUS NATURE

Hello all,

Things have been a bit quiet since autumn left us with winter rains, cold and bare trees. For me, it's always a time of bereavement over the last leaf that fell, the end of propagating season and the reappearance of mud and frost. But things are not always as they seem.

Imagine my surprise recently when I looked into one of my tubs containing bulbs and saw the emergence of strong vibrant stalks. But that wasn't the real surprise: after all, their appearance was expected.

These particular pots had been stored under my chestnut trees as part of a group of pots I was preparing to take with me when I move house shortly. Throughout autumn, they had gradually and silently been clothed with layers of falling chestnut leaves, forming a cloak under which mysterious things were happening.

Despite the fact that the leaves



How can
daffodil
shoots
spear
through
leaves?

are only light, I couldn't believe my eyes when I saw the daffodil stalks poking holes through the dead chestnut leaves. We tend to think of young plant tissue as delicate and fragile. But not these stalks. They were coming up whether anything was on top of them not.

I would have thought that if the stalks were that strong, they might have pushed the leaf aside. But to cut through the leaves is a strange and amazing feat indeed.

It reminded me of something I saw while shopping in a country town last year. There, outside a shop, on the footpath and beside a pole, was a young tomato plant. It had pushed through the bricks and was even producing fruit.

I'm forever amazed at how the world of plants continues to surprise us with its tenacity, ingenuity and perseverance ...even in winter! Pondering such wondrous things can make a dull, long winter even bearable!

Ray Slade

THE WORLD THROUGH FRESH EYES

Hi to all at *Good Life*,
When my order arrived I was waiting to have surgery for an absolutely life-changing experience (for me anyway). I was born with congeni-

tal cataracts and the lenses were removed when very young. I have always worn these most hideous thick glasses; did change to contacts in my 20s but could only wear them for work, not all day, though it wasn't possible to get lens implants because of scarring tissue, but found a fantastic surgeon. This was the scariest decision I have ever had to make as any mistake meant blindness. The first eye was an absolute breeze. I waited a month and had the second eye done. The first two weeks it was a bit of a nightmare but, ecstatic to say, everything is now absolutely wonderful, it couldn't be better. I may require glasses in the future for long vision but that's nothing.

The biggest change is that I am able to do my gardening without having to worry about my glasses slipping or getting dirty or wet. I just love my quarter-acre of paradise (with ex-battery hens). This to me is well worth it. Everyday is like a new day for me, so much better than winning lotto. I am ever so grateful for this chance. Anyway I love your magazine and the book club — looking forward to receiving my order. Good health to all,

Irena Prozenko, Victoria Park, WA

Dear Irena. Thanks so much for your message and support of Good Life

and Earth Garden. We're thrilled your op was a great success and so pleased you are able to enjoy the garden and chooks more.
— Fiona

BACKYARD FARMER

Hi Fiona,
What a fantastic magazine. I usually borrow *Earth Garden* from my local library so it is only recently that I realised *Back Yard Farmer* existed. I love the practical aspects of your articles. Some articles in other magazines assume no knowledge and therefore miss a bit of depth, so I really appreciate your clear articles. I absolutely love the easy solar dryer article in Number 11 and the photos of the flowers, bees, frogs and gardening articles are all spectacular and inspiring. That's what it is all about!

Having lived in other (warmer) areas of Australia, I would really appreciate some gardening tips for those of us living in Alpine Victoria.

All the best, ✱

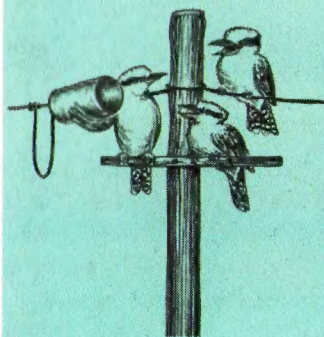
Lee



Back Yard Farmer: a garden full of practical tips.

Hi Lee. Great to get your glowing feedback — very much appreciated. To order any back issues of Back Yard Farmer or to take out a subscription, go to www.goodlifebookclub.com or call (03) 5424 1814. — Fiona

**EARTH PEOPLE WRITE
CONTINUES ON PAGE 82**



BUSH TELEGRAPH

Any news items of interest to Earth Gardeners may be submitted to 'Bush Telegraph'. Please send notice of meetings, festivals and gatherings well in advance of the events.

BHUTAN TO BE WORLD'S FIRST ORGANIC COUNTRY

The small, landlocked country of Bhutan is aiming to increase its national happiness by becoming the first country in the world to completely shift to organic farming. About 80 per cent of Bhutan's 800,000 residents depend on agriculture for their livelihoods. The country plans to use the organic status, which it hopes to achieve by 2020, as an export marketing strategy. But co-ordinator of the national organic program, Kesang Tshomo, says the main impetus was to further promote the government's goal of gross national happiness, or GNH.

"For the country which adopts and lives GNH, organic farming is the only way to farm," she said. "Organic farming also considers health, conservation, justice and biodiversity and all of this is a part of GNH has well. GNH looks at not only the economic value, but diversity, the environment, governance and health. All of

these are so similar it's almost identical."

Ms Tshomo said because pesticide use is already very low in Bhutan, she doesn't think the transition will be too difficult to achieve. But she said the shift to organic systems will be slower in certain cash crops like potatoes, citrus and apples.

"In our strategy we have identified that there may be some core food crops which will be the last on the list to be converted," she said. "The government wants to focus more on research and development to find alternatives to pesticides."

While Ms Tshomo says that in more developed countries the shift to organic production may result in lower yields, that hasn't been Bhutan's experience. "In the last ten years of observation we haven't seen a decline in yield," she said. "In fact, in the second and third year, the yields have increased and the soil quality has improved."

—ABC



Bhutan's transition to organics fits with its famous policy of Gross National Happiness.

Vanessa Boothman's family now have pure, clean water every day thanks to the Carocell solar still.



AUSSIE-INVENTED SOLAR STILL PURIFIES TANK WATER

"It's great to be self-reliant, growing our own food, harvesting sustainable firewood from the property and of course living off rainwater tanks," says Vanessa Boothman from Mt Phillipa at Merriang in Victoria. However in her family's idyllic bush setting with abundant bird life, concerns over the quality of tank water were constantly on their minds.

"The water was normally light tea colour due to the trees, and of course the roof is popular for birds roosting and possums playing, adding additional undesirable things to our water. We looked for a solution which would fit in with our lifestyle, something that was natural, required no chemicals and worked without hassle, removing the possible pathogens and colour from our water supply."

Vanessa found the solar desalination system called Carocell which "seemed to tick all our boxes", following the natural water cycle of evaporation and condensation in providing pure water.

"We mounted the unit on top of our water tank and with the combination of their solar pump kit, this allows the Carocell unit to operate automatically with solar energy."

When the sun comes out the pump starts up, sucking the feed water from the water tank into the Carocell unit. As the water travels down inside the unit a percentage of the water is evaporated and condensed,

and at the bottom of the unit there are two outlets, the pure water and the remaining feed water.

"The pure water goes into a collection container. We have two of these; one sits on the kitchen bench while the other is being filled up. The remaining feed water which has been filtered and UV treated flows out of the still and is directed back into the water tank so we do not have any water loss. This flowthrough system means that I don't have to do any cleaning or maintenance," says Melissa.

The Carocell 3000 is producing around 15- 20 litres per day, "which is all we require".

The unit was easy to set up and was operating within one hour of its arrival, says Vanessa. The modular system allows for more units to be added together if you need more water. This natural method of water purification means that the Carocell system can be used for all types of water (sea water, bore water, dam water etc) to produce your own pure water supply.

The Carocell 3000 was recently included in the Top 100 in the Global Sustainability Awards. It costs \$495 including GST; freight and a solar pump are extra. For more information about the Carocell 3000 visit the FCubed website at: www.fcubed.com.au.

DECODING SECRETS OF THE SACRED LOTUS

University of Adelaide researchers have helped unlock the genetic secrets of one of the world's most unique and



The sacred lotus has an incredible ability to generate heat, behaving like a warm-blooded animal.

culturally significant plants, the sacred lotus. Among other intriguing properties, the sacred lotus has the ability to generate heat and regulate its temperature like birds and mammals. It has been cultivated as a food crop for more than 7000 years in Asia and is prominent in both Buddhism and Hinduism.

An international team has sequenced and described the sacred lotus genome, now published online in *Genome Biology*. The paper sheds new light on the evolutionary position of the lotus, one of the world's oldest flowering plants, and facilitates further research into its unusual characteristics.

The lotus is also noted for its long-lived seeds — viable for over 1000 years — and for its water repellency and self-cleaning leaf surfaces. This 'lotus effect' is being adapted for industrial uses.

University of Adelaide plant physiologist, Associate Professor Jenny Watling, has had a longstanding international collaboration with researchers at the University of Illinois (who led this study), Iwate University in Japan and the University of Wollongong to study the physiology and heat generating properties of the sacred lotus.

"The sacred lotus has huge cultural, religious, economic and medicinal importance and many unusual traits. It also has great scientific significance," says Associate Professor Watling, who is Head of the School of Earth and Environmental Sciences. "Our work focuses on its incredible ability to generate heat so that it can keep a constant temperature of around 32-34 degrees over a two to three day period, while the environmental

temperature varies by up to 30 degrees — behaving like a warm-blooded animal."

Associate Professor Watling says the heat generated and the aromas released are particularly attractive to pollinating insects. "We've found the biochemical pathway the lotus uses for this heat regulation. The plant can switch this pathway on or off, depending on whether it needs more or less heat," she says. "We've discovered that this pathway depends on a single protein and we now have information about the genes that code for that protein, adding to our knowledge about the mechanisms of lotus thermo-regulation. "Other flowering plants also have this metabolic pathway, but few use it to the same amazing extent as the lotus."

COMMUNITIES CONFERENCE AT MOORA MOORA

A conference of intentional communities from around Australia will be held at the Moora Moora Cooperative Community near Healesville in Victoria on 6, 7 and 8 December. The conference follows a similar conference held at Bundagen Co-operative near Coffs Harbour NSW in 2011 and one held at Commonground Co-operative near Seymour in Victoria in 2001. Moora Moora is situated in a picturesque bush environment near Healesville, Victoria, and has established facilities for hosting courses and conferences.

Invitations are currently being sent to communities seeking suggestions for conference topics and offers to help to organise and run the conference. In previous years, topics have included ethics and governance, social

**Strawberries,
parsley, lettuce,
rocket, carrots
and basil:
yummy in any
rooftop garden.**



harmony and conflict resolution, legal issues, generational change, ownership models, community economies, environmental issues, and seeding new communities. It is expected that topics will be arranged in two streams, to meet the interests of newly forming communities as well as those of existing communities. Attendance at the conference will primarily be available to members of existing communities or communities which are in the process of forming.

As places are limited, participants will have to register beforehand, paying a conference fee of around \$150, entitling them to a campsite and attendance at conference sessions. The conference will be fully catered at a cost of \$35 per person per day. One of the longest lived intentional communities in Australia, Moora Moora will be celebrating its 40th anniversary next year. It currently has 50 members with 30 houses clustered on a 240 hectare property. For further information or with topic suggestions and offers of assistance, please contact the organisers at conference@mooramoorau.org.au.

GROWING FOOD IN SMALL SPACES WORKSHOPS

The Nature Conservation Council of NSW is running a free workshop series this spring to show Sydney inner-city dwellers they don't need a quarter-acre block to grow their own food. 'Growing Food in Small Spaces' is a series of three workshops being run in Redfern, Glebe, and Green Square, that encourages people to turn their patio or courtyard into a mini food bowl.

"A lot of people think they can't grow herbs and vegetables because they live in a flat or a townhouse, but it is amazing how much fresh produce you can harvest from a small balcony or courtyard," said workshop coordinator, Louise Kiddell. "The secret is to understand the importance of good soils and to think creatively



Leaves of fresh basil: anyone with even a small balcony can grow basil and make pesto.

about the way you use the space available. We have made the workshops as interactive and hands-on as possible so that people will see how fun and easy it is to grow edible plants. We hope to really inspire people to get growing at home".

The two-hour workshops are: 'Supercharge Your Soil'; 'Let's Grow Up! Vertical Gardening'; and 'From Patio to Pesto'. For workshop venues and times contact workshop coordinator Louise Kiddell on (02) 9516 1488 or by email at lkiddell@nccnsw.org.au.

FOOD FUNDAMENTALS

CUCUMBERS: COOL AS

In Victorian England it was the coolest sandwich filling going around. And where would we be in summer without refreshing cucumbers? Wendy Bartlett, of Nairne, South Australia, shows how to get the best from this coolest of cucurbits.



SUMMER in the vegetable garden wouldn't be complete without a few cucumber plants trailing along an old wire fence, beneath a pumpkin patch or spiralling up a sweet corn plant or two. The refreshing crunchy, cool, crispy flesh of a homegrown cucumber is something to savour and there are heaps of varieties to choose from.

Cucumbers are easy to grow if you resist the temptation to plant seeds out too early in spring. Planting into cool soil will only inhibit their growth and they'll be prone to disease and insect attack. They don't mind being transplanted so planting seeds into old egg cartons or seed trays is a great way to get them started indoors while you're waiting for the soil to warm up.

PREPARING THE SOIL

Two words — manure and compost — and loads of them. Aim to prepare the beds a month or so before planting out seedlings. Cucumbers need extra potassium for flower and fruit production so add a handful of sulphate of potash or wood ash to your bed during preparation. Under the right conditions where soil temperatures are around 20°C, seeds will germinate within a few days.

To avoid bitterness plants need regular watering, but they detest wet feet, so plant seeds into mounds one metre apart to improve drainage and water at ground level to avoid fungal diseases. Cucumbers

perform better when allowed to trail up a wire fence which makes good use of vertical space, protects fruit from attack by slugs and snails and enables the leaves to shade developing fruit which — in hot summers — can be scorched by the sun. I like to grow my cucumbers up a wire trellis about 3 m long by 30 cm high with climbing beans, which add nitrogen to the soil.

HOW TO INCREASE YIELDS

One thing I've learnt over the years is to plant plenty of flowering plants nearby your cucumber vines to encourage bees and other insects to enter the garden and pollinate the flowers. English marigolds are my choice as they self seed prolifically and require no attention apart from snipping off spent flower heads to encourage more flowers, but this is something I do as I go about my garden chores with my trusty secateurs in my hand. Allowing old vegetable plants and various herbs to go to seed attracts beneficial insects into the

garden, which gobble up any unwanted pests, meaning healthier plants and less work for you.

Cucumbers tend to produce female and male flowers according to day length and more female flowers are produced during shorter days. In cooler areas in the southern

parts of the continent, where day temperatures aren't consistently warm until early summer, a continuous crop of fruit can be expected, although later in the

Cucumbers perform better when allowed to trail up a wire fence which makes good use of vertical space, protects fruit from attack by slugs and snails and enables the leaves to shade developing fruit which — in hot summers — can be scorched by the sun.



The
Spacemaster
grows happily
in a pot.

The Burpless
Telegraph
cucumber is at
home on this
mesh fence.





Cucumbers perform better when allowed to trail up a wire fence which makes good use of vertical space, protects fruit from attack by slugs and snails and enables the leaves to shade developing fruit which — in hot summers — can be scorched by the sun.

The Richmond River cucumber also likes fences.

season, unless you experience periods of unseasonably cool weather. But in higher temperature areas in the northern regions, a gap in fruit during mid-summer can occur due to a higher number of male flowers. Basically too many cool days will produce plenty of female flowers but not enough male flowers to pollinate them, therefore few fruit, if any will set.

To avoid gaps during the season try planting several different varieties. I like to grow heirloom varieties of both bush and climbing cucumbers because heirlooms have better resistance to diseases like powdery mildew, have higher yields over an extended season and many of these are burpless. There are varieties that aren't day-length sensitive. There are even varieties that are parthenocarpic — blossoms creating seedless fruit without pollination (mainly greenhouse varieties where bees aren't present).

My favourites include Lebanese Mini Muncher

(heirloom) — harvest in 78 days, 16 fruit per plant; Spacemaster, a bush variety — harvest in 77 days, 8 fruit per plant; and Burpless Telegraph (heirloom) — harvest in 78 days, 14 fruit per plant. All three can be bought through Digger's Seeds.

Apply a liquid fertiliser once a fortnight when fruit begins to set for best results and mulch well during summer, but avoid planting mulch too close to stems as they might rot.

BEASTIES TO WATCH OUT FOR

The cucumber beetle usually makes its first appearance when the first flowers do and they can make a meal of them, reducing yields. The adults attack the leaves and the larvae eat stems and roots. To eradicate them try collecting some of them and blending them up, adding a little water and then spraying them back onto the plants. They don't like the smell of their own deceased and tend to disappear as quickly as they appeared. Plant tansy or radishes nearby, as these can be pungent enough to make the beetles think twice about visiting your patch. To eradicate eel worm, spray with a sugar solution — 1 kg sugar to half a bucket of water.

Watch out for red spider mites, which often

The refreshing crunchy, cool, crispy flesh
of a homegrown cucumber is something
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varieties to choose from.





Pickled cucumbers are almost as good as fresh ones.

show up when powdery mildew is present and — in my garden — almost always show up at the end of the season. If white fly is a problem, spray with Derris powder or a half-strength pyrethrum on the under surfaces of leaves.

DISEASES TO BE AWARE OF

Powdery mildew, although it occurs naturally at the end of the season, can reduce yields. It tends to occur if plants are too closely planted together or have lush growth near the soil surface. I tend not to worry about treating powdery mildew unless it attacks early on in the season. Try combining some seaweed, comfrey, horsetail and chamomile in an old saucepan and boil for twenty minutes, strain, cool and then spray onto your plants. Similarly, try using a cheap home-brew spray made from the leaves of the white cedar (*Melia azederach*) tree or spray with a tea made from nettle plants.

You can use a sulphur dust to control mildew but both sides of leaves need to be dusted, so growing plants over a dome-shaped wire trellis is a great way of not only picking the fruit, but gaining access to both sides of leaves if dusting is necessary.

Don't dust with sulphur in hot weather as damage to foliage can occur.

CUCUMBER FRIENDS

Cucumbers are compatible plants to many vegetables including lettuces, peas, beans, celery, sweet corn, Savoy cabbages, chillies, sunflowers, nasturtiums and scented geraniums. Tansy and radish, when left to go to seed, deter the cucumber beetle.

SAVING SEED

Cucumbers will not cross with any other type of vegetable except a cucumber, so for seed to be true to the parent type you'll need to hand-pollinate or plant different varieties 500 metres apart (not easy in a small garden). Leave the chosen cucumbers to fully ripen on the vine, remove pulp, allow seeds to ferment for a few days while jelly surrounding them dissolves. Wash under a sieve and allow to dry for ten days, making sure they don't stick together. Seeds can be stored in a cool, dry place for up to ten years.

If you find yourself picking more cucumbers than you can handle, let alone eat, then think yourself lucky. And for those you can't give away, try pickling them for later use.

LIVING IN FOWL TIMES

From Araucanas to Transylvanian Naked Necks, Alanna Moore welcomes your queries about living with chooks. Alanna, from Castlemaine, Victoria, is EG's chook guru. Write to *Earth Garden*, PO Box 2, Trentham, Victoria, 3458 or email info@earthgarden.com.au.



THE GOODNESS OF EGGS

In the abundance of springtime, the egg season is upon us again! Providing us with eggs-cellent, protein-rich tucker, eggs are economical to produce in the back yard. They come in their own natural packaging, in beautiful shells of many colours and with good keeping qualities. There are myriad uses for them in cooking.

But many people have been holding back on eating eggs because of dietary warnings to avoid the Big C — cholesterol. Or they fear salmonella poisoning from contaminated duck eggs. Now that your layers will be working overtime producing them, it's timely to reappraise the true goodness of eggs and how to maintain it.

There has been a lot of hype about high cholesterol levels in the last few decades, and it has become quite a big industry, testing for and medicating against it. But cholesterol isn't such a bogey after all, it turns out. It's essential for health, actually. So tuck in!

The egg is rich in many nutrients; it's a wholesome package of super goodness. The average egg is made up of:

- 7.2 g protein
- 0.6 g carbohydrate
- 6.7 g fat
- 41 g water



*The egg is rich in many nutrients;
it's a wholesome package of
super goodness.*

The white contains virtually no fat, and the fat in the yolk is in a saturated form. Eggs are also rich in iron; vitamins A, D and B; riboflavin; niacin and thiamine. The amount each egg contains depends on the variety and quality of the hen's diet.

What happens after the egg is laid will also affect that goodness. How the egg is collected, cleaned, stored, graded, packaged and cooked also influences its quality. Eggs from truly organic, free-range chickens are far less likely to contain dangerous bacteria, such as salmonella, and their nutrient content is also much higher than in commercial eggs.

PROTECTING EGG QUALITY

If you want to enjoy them at their best, there is an art to collecting eggs for eating. Because eggs rapidly deteriorate when warm, you should gather them early, when they are as fresh as possible. It is also best to keep nests as clean and comfortable as possible so that eggs are always clean. It is much easier and better to produce clean eggs than to have to clean up dirty eggs.

The reason is that eggshells are very porous, with approximately 7,500 pores or openings. The outer shell surface is covered with a waxy cuticle (the bloom) that

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seals the egg and helps prevent bacteria from entering. Gases are transferred and moisture is lost through these pores.

The vast majority of bacteria associated with an egg are found on the shell. Thus, commercially, eggs may be chemically washed or coated with dubious substances that can potentially soak inside. Rather than washing dirty eggs, which also removes the protective cuticle layer, a brisk rub with a rough mitt or rag that is only just damp will usually do the trick. However, a dunk in warm water may be sometimes necessary. This is okay if it is quick and not too hot.

One can also wipe dirty eggshells with a solution of plain vinegar (mixed with three parts warm water) — it's quite effective at removing both bacteria and stains

on eggshells.

Eggs that are fresh and have an intact cuticle do not need to be refrigerated, as long as you are going to consume them within a relatively short period of time (7 to 10 days). If refrigerated, eggs will keep for up to 45 days, but they'll soon dry out if kept in the egg rack. If they are not going to be used straight away, it's best if they stay in their carton when in the fridge.

Eggs can also keep well for three weeks unrefrigerated, if clean eggs are lightly sprayed with oil on the day that they are laid. However, this is usually done with mineral oil, which can go on to affect the egg white. This petroleum product was never intended for you to eat. Vegetable oil is a better alternative.

Freezing eggs is also a possibility in a glut. The

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Eggs from truly organic, free-range chickens are far less likely to contain dangerous bacteria, such as salmonella, and their nutrient content is also much higher than in commercial eggs.

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CSIRO recommends that whites and yolks are best separated and then separately beaten lightly with a little added sugar (one tablespoon per six egg whites or yolks) or a teaspoon of salt (per six) as an added preservative before freezing.

TESTING FOR FRESHNESS

Occasionally a mystery egg will turn up in an overlooked spot and you'll wonder whether it is stale or good to eat. A classic test is to dunk the egg in a bowl of cool water and see if it sinks, in which case it is fresh. An old, stale egg is very gaseous and will float to the surface.

Another test for freshness is to break an egg into a pan to see how firm the white and yolk are. If the white stands up high around the yolk and doesn't spread all over the pan, then it is fresh. This firm structure breaks down with heat and aging. To avoid eating eggs that are old, it can be a good idea to write the date of collection on one end of each egg in pencil.

When it is time to cook refrigerated eggs, it's best first to let them warm up to room temperature. Use the freshest eggs for frying. If the eggs are to be boiled, however, select eggs that are a few days old, as they are easier to shell.

Never over-boil eggs: they become tough and indigestible. A light simmer will do.

EGGSHELL COLOUR

There used to be a myth, one that possibly still persists, about eggshell colour influencing nutritional factors, that is, that brown eggs are like wholemeal. Yes, it's definitely a myth. All eggs are basically the same, apart from nutritional factors derived from the quality of birds' feed.

And it's not just brown and white eggs out there. A rainbow spectrum of eggshell colours comes from heritage breeds of chooks and ducks, such as



Different coloured eggs look a treat on the table when served up together boiled in the shell.

the blue, green, turquoise and khaki hues of the Araucana fowl; from the pale-blue shells of Pekin duck eggs, to the blue-green of Cayuga duck eggs; the rich browns of the Welsummer and New Hampshire, and the chocolate brown of Barnevelder eggs. Jungle Fowl lay small pink-shelled eggs, while Leghorns produce large white ones. (If you know your hens well you can spot just which individual laid what egg!) Viva la diversity!

The different coloured eggs do look fabulous, especially when all mixed together in a carton, as I used to sell them! They also look a treat on the table when served up together boiled in the shell. Happy chookery!

FROM SPADE TO BLADE

• GARDEN RECIPES BY GARY THOMAS •



Favourite seasons can vary, as Gary, from Daylesford, Victoria, finds, while he blends flavours from Genoa and the Italian Alps, and India and Polynesia.

Photos by: Pete Swan Photography swan@peteswanphotography.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE SEASON OF THE YEAR?

I've been asked this question so many times over the decades, and have always given the same answer, instantly and without further analysis: autumn.

I come from a very practical background, with the influence of parents born during the Great Depression and I guess I've always chosen autumn because it is so very, very useful.

There is the great array of veg and fruit ready to pick and eat in my district, all that harvesting to complete and preserve, chutney to make and fruit to dry, sausages to hang, pumpkins to cellar.

Then we have the leaves to rake and compost, and the satisfaction of a garden bed prepared and protected for the times ahead. Yes, my favourite — heavy toil with instantly discernible results.

And I like winter as well, for the feeling of cold and, because I'm fundamentally lazy despite my father's example, my belief that lying around in front of a fire reading books all day is a legitimate activity during these colder weeks.

But, thinking on this *Earth Garden* column, I feel that things have somehow changed within me recently, and spring is now the bestest time of all.

The smells, the vigour, the running sap, both within and without, snowpeas and extra chirpy birds, the feel of light clothing or none at all, smiling faces, wicked parties, energy, energy, energy.

And the way the old transitions into the new. Like potatoes and herbs.

TICINESE POTATOES

This enriched butter is influenced by the trade route from the port of Genoa to the southern Italian Alps. The



Baked wedges in
Ticinese Butter.



Ingredients for Ticinese Butter.

quantity is adequate for this many spuds with plenty left over for another go. It's a pretty strong flavour, so you may prefer to back off the anchovy and chilli a bit.

1 kg potato — Dutch Creams are terrific.

4 tbs olive oil

20 anchovy fillets

6 garlic cloves, peeled

1 chilli, red, hot

10 fresh sage leaves

2 bay leaves, fresh or dried ok

400 g butter

Salt, pepper, parsley to taste

1. Mash, blend or whiz together all except the potatoes.

2. Cut spuds into wedges and toss liberally in the enriched butter.



Ticinese Butter roll.

3. Bake in a moderate to hot oven for 30 minutes. Eat straight out of the pan.

4. Place remaining butter into kitchen paper and roll into a sausage shape, twisting both ends to fill the tube. Refrigerate. This is a very handy way to store for many uses.



Amanda Holloway
piping a
potato nest
inside a scone
cutter mould.

POTATO NESTS

These are made with your favourite mashing potato, with the addition of milk or oil or nothing at all, whichever your personal favourite may be. People sometimes use an egg yolk to bind the mash in shape but I have never found the need, and I reckon it makes the mix a little rubbery as well. A little egg wash brushed onto the finished nests, however, can give a very pleasing appearance.

If you don't want to enrich the mix at all, press the well-cooked potato into a hot bowl and it will still mash finely. Since we are piping through a nozzle, it needs to be as smooth as possible to avoid clogging.

I use a hand-held ricer, which has a steel strainer bowl about 500 ml and a geared arm that forces the potato through. It is a very effective tool.

1. Use a large piping bag with a six- to eight-millimetre

fluted nozzle for best effect. Fold back the top 5 to 10 centimetres of your piping bag before filling. It really cuts down on the overall mess. Spoon in mash, open out bag and twist the throat tightly. This will make it a lot easier to pipe smoothly and without strain.

2. Oil a flat sheet tray or cover with baking paper. Mark out circles or use a template, as per the photo. Starting from the middle, pipe a continuous circle, with the edges of the mash just touching. When the base is full, pipe two raised circles around the outer rim.

3. Brush with egg wash, if using, and bake in the pre-heated oven at 190°C for around 12 to 15 minutes. This can be done several hours in advance, if needed, and flashed back through a hot oven for a couple of minutes just before serving. Do not refrigerate as they tend to crack.

4. Fill with your favourite spring casserole or cooked julienne veg and shredded saladings as a fancy treat.



Potato nests filled with warm Farro and kale salad.

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YOUR FUTURE, YOUR CHOICE!



The spice mix for Fiji Potatoes.

FIJI LENTIL POTATOES

A delicious filling casserole to feed a whole family. Toss any leftovers in a cup of flour and beaten egg to make a tasty lunchtime fritter.

Fiji masala is a particular blend of curry spice deriving from the Indian influence in Polynesia. You can substitute any garam masala with sweet topnotes.

- 3 kg waxy potatoes, diced large
- 500 g lentils, soaked 2 hours or overnight
- 1 cup sunflower oil
- 2.5 tsp white mustard seeds
- 7 tsp cumin seeds
- 50 g fresh ginger, minced
- 10 tsp chilli
- 2 L tomato purée
- 10 tsp Fiji masala mix
- 4 tsp salt
- 1.5 L stock
- 2 cups fresh coriander leaves, washed

1. Drain the lentils then put them in a saucepan with the stock to cover and simmer until soft.
2. Heat the oil in a large pot, and gently fry together the mustard, cumin, ginger and chilli for a couple of min-



Fiji Curry Potatoes.

utes. Add the masala mix, stir a couple of times then add the diced potato and mix through.

3. Add the tomato purée, stock and lentils to the big pot, bring just to the boil, and simmer gently until the potato is soft but not broken. Stir frequently as the lentils tend to catch on the bottom and burn if left unattended too long.
4. When ready, fold through the coriander leaves and serve with rice and wilted spring greens.

And now for some more things I like about spring: tennis on grass courts, soft mint, fast-flowing creeks with brown trout and yabbies, wedding season, wild rocket and salad burnet, happy people, dogs with waggy tails, beer, and summer, just around the corner.

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WHY DO YOU READ THIS MAG?

Who reads *Earth Garden*? How did they find this little mag among the thousands that scream at you from newsagency shelves? Do you remember the first issue of *EG* you ever read? For Wendy Bartlett, from Nairne, South Australia, *EG*'s regular 'Food Fundamentals' contributor, that first copy came at just the right time.

STILL remember picking up my first copy of *EG* in the summer of 2006–2007. I was in the middle of transforming my back yard from a water-guzzling cottage garden into a haven for growing as much organically-grown food as possible and, of course, it included a hen house. I stumbled across a copy of *Earth Garden*, with a gorgeous chook on the cover, in the newsagent's and I was hooked from the very first page — this magazine was exactly what I was looking for and I instantly felt a sense of connection with other like-minded people. I was drawn to one of the main articles, which was a special: 'Summer Garden Survival — Tips and Ideas' as I was at the stage of laying down a watering system.

I continue to enjoy reading *Earth Garden* because it's the only practical and down-to-earth magazine out there for both country and city dwellers that you can read over and over again. The high quality of the publication and passion of both contributors and readers seems to grow stronger as the years roll by. Personally, I don't believe living a more self-sustainable lifestyle is one I've chosen — it's one that has chosen me. It just makes sense. I can't imagine living any other way.

And of course, *Earth Garden* readers are fantastically interesting people with brilliant ideas, endless enthusiasm, and patience and consideration for the planet, its living things and for others.



Wendy instantly felt a sense of connection with other like-minded people.

I've always enjoyed reading any articles about how to grow organic, chemical-free food, so much so that it led me to study horticulture and work in several wonderful gardens in the Adelaide Hills for over ten years. Other favourite topics include the 'Frugal Tips', 'Season by Season' with Jackie French and 'Living in Fowl Times' with Alanna Moore.

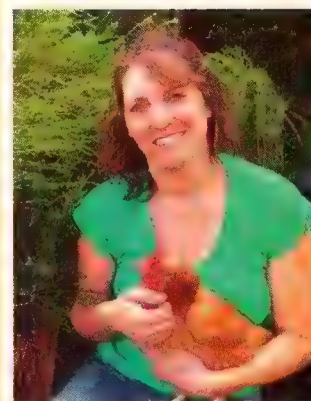
I have a soft spot for chooks and I remember the *Bush Telegraph* article on the fight to rid the country of battery cages for hens. It both saddened and angered me. I was shocked to learn there are still 12 million hens living a miserable and inhumane life in battery cages. After owning and falling in love with many chickens over the years and their individual personalities — yes, they really are all different — and observing their enormous and important contribution to recycling and improving the health of our soils, it breaks my heart to know there are so many hens suffering.

Earth Garden is relevant to my lifestyle because it's like checking in each issue with my community of fellow Earth Gardeners all over Australia and beyond. We are all doing similar things in our back yards, on our farms and inner city dwellings. Sharing this information from people who strive for a greener way of living with other like-minded people is the best way to spread the wisdom of Earth Gardeners everywhere.

Over the years I have volunteered in community gardens, studied horticulture, written many articles on sustainable living and worked on a couple of lovely properties in the Adelaide Hills caring for other people's gardens.

I have recently set up my own Therapeutic Massage Therapy business called Nurturing U Massage in Nairne in the Adelaide Hills so I can have the best of both worlds. I can work from home and have plenty of time to potter around the garden and share my knowledge and passion for gardening with others through writing.

If you'd like to drop me a line, you can contact me by email: wannbartlett@gmail.com or if you live in the Adelaide Hills and are interested in a massage you can check out my website: www.nurturingmassage.com.au. I'd love to hear from you.



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HERBANISATION

[her-buhn-eye-zey-shuh-n] *noun*. The act or fact of herbanising or taking on the characteristics of many gardens growing herbs: "Herbanisation leads to healthier lifestyles, happy organic gardeners and less factory farming."



ALOE VERA: ANCIENT HERB, MODERN USES

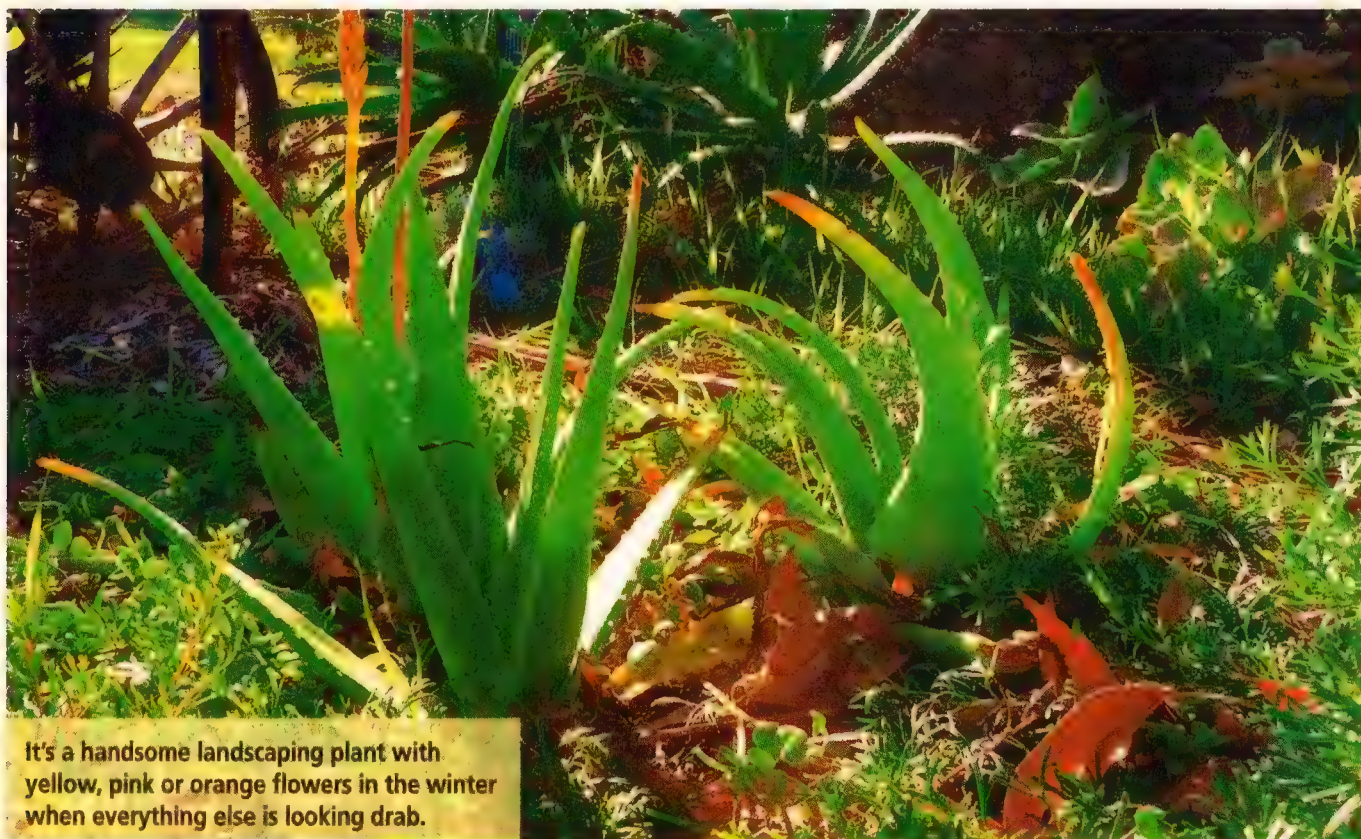
Aloe Vera has been used since ancient times for a multitude of medicinal, first aid and cosmetic purposes. Tanya Jenkyn, of Esperance, Western Australia, continues her series by showing how to get the most from this essential herb.

ORIGINATING in the Cape Verde Islands, west of the Senegal Coast off Africa, Aloe Vera began to make its appearance in historical records around the 16th century BC in Egypt, Arabia and India. According to John 19:39, Aloe Vera (or a variety very close to it) may have been used to embalm the body of Christ "Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes. Taking Jesus' body, they wrapped it, with the spices, in strips of linen."

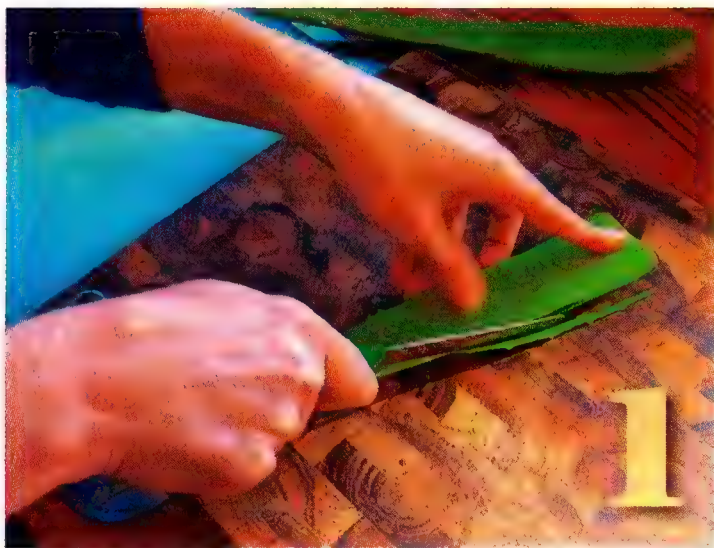
Throughout the ages, Aloe Vera has remained a

staple in the tool kit of healers. Traditionally it was used internally as a purgative or laxative and externally for wound healing.

Today we have a greater understanding of the pharmacology of Aloe Vera and clinical trials are exploring the possibilities of this succulent herb. Taken internally, Aloe may slow the growth of tumours, stabilise blood sugar in diabetics, stabilise blood cholesterol levels and increase circulation. Results are not immediate (or conclusive). Changes seem to occur only after a pe-



It's a handsome landscaping plant with yellow, pink or orange flowers in the winter when everything else is looking drab.



The best way to get at the useful part is to shear off the outside edges with the spiky bits and then run a knife through the middle, creating fillets of aloe gel.

riod of at least 30 days and none of these miracles seem to happen with just Aloe Vera by itself. Aloe Vera appears to be a collaborative herb. Its efficacy lies in helping to increase the activity or potency of other elements, like vitamins C and E and antioxidants. Studies are also being made into Aloe Vera's use in IBS and ulcerative colitis.

Externally, Aloe Vera is a soothing and healing gel, a disinfectant and astringent, stimulating circulation and promoting the growth of new tissue. Hence its major application being in beauty and skin care products. I would not be surprised if it was equally healing and soothing to the digestive tract and intestines if taken (cautiously of course) internally. All good reasons to start adding a little to your smoothies perhaps.

The skin of the Aloe is quite bitter and apart from being used to paint fingernails to halt nail biting, it's generally best discarded. It can actually act as an irritant to some folk. The useful part of Aloe Vera is the gel — slimy

gelatinous goo that oozes from the fat spears when you crack it open. I find the best way to do this is to shear off the outside edges with the spiky bits and then run a knife through the middle, creating fillets of aloe gel.

I came across one article about Aloe Vera recently that hypothesised about using Aloe Vera gel instead of cling film to coat the edges of cut vegetables for storage. I'm on a quest to eliminate unnecessary single use plastics from my home, as I'm sure many of you are too, so I'm giving it a go. No results yet but it's so crazy, it might just work!

Apart from being a handy plant to keep in the yard for minor cuts and burns, insect bites and sunburn, Aloe Vera is very easy to cultivate. It thrives in dry sandy soils, requiring little more than a little water over the hottest part of the summer. It can take full sun but will still do fine in a bright shady spot. It's a handsome landscaping plant with rosettes of bright green spears and yellow,



**Son Monty
helps with the
propagation.**

**Son Bailer likes
to help too.**

All photos by Jennene Riggs.

pink or orange flowers in the winter when everything else is looking drab.

Growing up in Australia, sunburn was part and parcel of summertime (obviously I grew up just prior to the 'slip slop slap' campaign) and I don't think one summer passed in our home without our trusty Aloe plant donating much of that year's growth to being sliced open and laid on our bare pink backs, legs and faces. There's nothing quite like the feeling of relief as a cool slimy fillet of aloe is laid on sizzled skin, drawing out the heat of the day's sun and leaving a balm of healing goodness.

Taking this legacy on board, every home I've

lived in since has had Aloe Vera. In fact I think we've been carting the same parent plant of Aloe Vera with us for over ten years, yanking out pups willy-nilly to give to friends or to plant out in the parts of the garden that are not likely to get much love or attention. The first place I establish a crop is close to the shed for some instant first aid for amateur welders and handy folk, then at the back door, then the front, a little around the side, down at the vegie patch, near the cubby house ... you get the message: we never run short of Aloe Vera, nor would we want to. It may be the most indispensable herb in the garden.



The first place I
establish a crop is
close to the shed for
some instant first aid
for amateur welders
and handy folk, then
at the back door,
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little around the side,
down at the vegie
patch, near the cubby
house...

HARD WASTE

for fun and profit

Like beauty, usefulness must be in the eye of the beholder. That's why John Olle, of Frankston, Victoria, looks forward to his local hard rubbish collection.

OTHER people look forward to special times of the year like Easter, Christmas, birthdays or the summer holidays. Call me weird, but every year my most exciting time is anticipating the coming local hard waste collection. I feel like a kid at Christmas because I know that every year there will be some new and wonderful possibilities out there. It may be an ordinary object I can reuse in a new and unusual way or some object I've never thought to collect or never come across before which a creative flash of inspiration turns into something useful and incredibly satisfying. In short, marvellous things can happen.

I try to live by the principles of reduce, re-use and recycling in that order. Collecting hard waste and re-using objects is much better than recycling them or adding to landfill. According to the Victorian Department of Sustainability and Environment, 87 per

cent of hard waste by weight ends up in landfill. Only 13 per cent is recycled. As far as I'm concerned this is an environmental crime and clearly, collecting and re-using it is more environmentally responsible than recycling it or shoving it in a hole in the ground. Why put a beautiful glass bottle with a high embodied energy into your recycling bin where it will be crunched and smashed to make a new one when it can be re-used again and again?

I'll admit it — I'm a junk addict, or 'tip rat' as they used to be known, and I've collected 'rubbish' on and off for years. While a sense of environmental responsibility may now conveniently give me rational justifications for my mania, my greatest enjoyment in collecting hard waste is the opportunity to use my creative potential. Some hard waste can be used as is for its original purpose, but the real excitement, sense of adventure and spirit of invention is really in transmuting something



Bathtub planted with carrots, salsify and parsnips. Totally bird-proof.



A bed frame makes a handy trellis.

and using it for a totally different purpose.

Hard waste is a wonderful resource for the urban Permaculturalist. One of my favourite objects to collect are bathtubs — set up at waist height, they are easy to weed and therefore great for slow growing plants such as carrots or parsnips that often get snuffed out by weeds, or crops such as beans that often get attacked by snails. It's also easier to keep the birds from scratching out plants or seeds because the bathtubs can easily be covered by wire frames, flywire or bird netting. Bathtubs can also be used for starting seedlings early in the season if you cover the top with plastic or a large piece of glass. My latest piece of glass was part of a large Bunnings outside table collected from a nature strip just round the corner. Other uses for bathtubs include a worm farm (very successful), water tank, part of a fish raising system, a place for growing aquatic plants, a garden



John with some bathtub-grown produce.



The steel bed frame also makes a handy temporary fence.

pond set in the ground, part of a grey water treatment system, a compost bin, a duck pond and, of course, an indoor or outdoor bath.

Another current favourite are steel bed frames (the part used to support the mattress), which have innumerable uses. My latest acquisition was a whole steel bed which I turned upside down and now use as a potting table, where I raise seedlings and other pot plants — it gets them above the ground away from roving snails and chooks. The frame without the bed ends can also be used in the same way if you attach some kind of legs to them.

They are also useful as temporary fencing around a garden bed when we want the chooks to roam in the rest of the garden, or alternatively, for keeping the chooks in to scratch up and prepare part of the garden before planting, or to graze a lawn or orchard area. They also work well as permanent fences. I am now setting some up as permanent trellises for growing beans and peas.

Other things I've collected lately include an aluminium TV antenna chopped up to become tomato stakes, a 200-litre drum now used as a compost bin, a wooden bed transformed into a door frame and kitchen shelves, two broken garden seats now repaired, a lot of useful sawn timber, bamboo fencing and gates, a coil of

large poly pipe now used for a wicking bed, corrugated iron for the chook pen roof and an old barrow re-painted and now growing succulents. Metal racks from old ovens and fridges are used to keep birds off seedlings.

The beaut thing about hard waste is that it's free. However, other cheap items for re-use can be obtained from op shops, Rotary sales, garage sales and other avenues such as Thursday Ad. I've bought plastic or metal 200-litre drums for \$10 to \$20. These I use for wood and garden tool storage, as a worm farm or cut in half as large containers for growing citrus trees, pumpkins and tomatoes. Bricks at 20c each (when the new price is about \$1) I have used for garden paths and beds.

As with anything though, we must learn to live within our limits. After several years of addiction to hard waste I feel I am now able to successfully manage my problem. Not long ago, a neighbour left some furniture on the nature strip, including a lovely looking pine desk. I was tempted to retrieve it but I already had a very nice pine desk bought for \$20 at a Rotary sale. My monkey mind said to me: "But this one's for free!" I managed to resist by reminding myself that the first 'R' is in fact REDUCE. And that includes the amount of hard waste I collect!

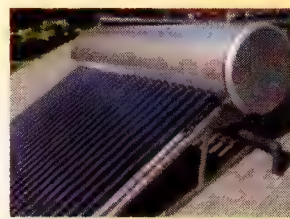
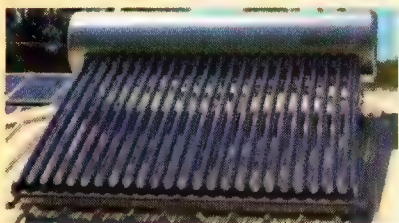
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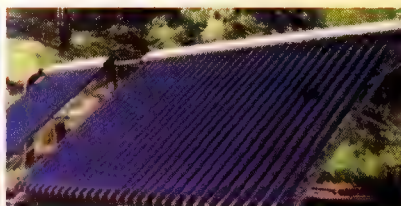
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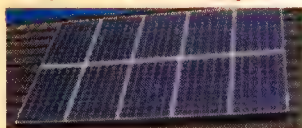


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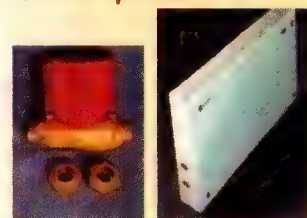
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JILLAROO'S HOW TO...

HUNGRY GAP IN THE SPRING GARDEN

Finding enough to eat from your garden between crops is a challenge for the best of gardeners. However, the resourceful Jill Redwood, of Goongerah, Victoria, is equal to the task.



THIS in-between-crops time is considered by many as the most menu-challenging season of the year. The winter garden vegies are now keen to flower and shoot to seed. But the tomato seedlings are still being nurtured and the soil's not quite warm enough for corn or beans yet. The winter crops finish but the spring/summer vegies are still weeks or months off. So what's on the menu at this time of the garden year? Besides the stored pumpkins, potatoes, bottled tomatoes, dried soup beans, onion and garlic plaits, the fresh food department still has quite a lot to fill the dinner table with.

BROAD BEANS

The mainstays for our southern climate spring menus are broad beans and asparagus. Yes, I know; they seem like opposite ends of the 'yum' scale. I too used to turn my nose up at broad beans but have learnt to love 'em. The trick is not to boil them to billio until they are grey and lifeless. Cook them until they are just done, cool them a little and then get the kids or friends to help pinch off one end of their skin and squeeze them out. Vivid shiny green tender beans slip into the bowl. They are just asking to make friends with garlic, oil, salt, pep-

Early spring fare
— broccoli and leek
pie, with eggs.





The pom-pom seed heads of chives and spring onions are delicious deep fried in a light batter. Then leave them to grow on and they'll double their numbers.



Silver beet is keen to go to seed as the days warm up. Plant last year's saved seed thickly to produce baby spinach greens through spring.

per, lemon zest, lemon thyme, or your favourite herbs. Make a dip, a chunky pasta sauce, a soup, a salad highlight ... endless possibilities. Some people even deep fry them and coat with oil and salt as a snack food. And of course they are the traditional beans (also called fava beans) used for making falafel. Broadies are the only beans I know of that withstand winter's frosts.

GREENS

As the days lengthen and warm up, green leafies lose interest in making voluptuous leaves; they shoot up their seed heads instead. Silver beet, brassicas such as broccoli, cabbage, rocket, cauli and kale, parsley, lettuce and mustards just want to get their progeny happening. You can cut their stalks back but they'll be determined! For the immature flower heads like broccoli and cauli, that's exactly what you want. But once you cut off their flower heads don't pull them up. They'll quickly get busy making another flowerhead or six. You can keep eating these for another month or so until they become weaker and smaller. If you start to feel some sympathy for their maternal drive, let them complete their life cycle and produce flowers and seeds.

Stinging nettle is a traditional spring tonic food, fantastic in soups, pies or quiches.

As for the other greens, select the qualities you want to reproduce, like the biggest leaves, the last ones to send up seed heads or the most disease-resistant, then let them make seed. You can tie a ribbon or string on them to mark those being saved for seed. The rest can be fed to the chooks, goats, guinea pigs or compost heap. Their flowers can also be added to salads or cooked meals.

ONION FAMILY

To keep the leeks from sending a big seed stalk up too early, mulch them thickly to keep the ground cool for longer, though I think they know when it's time to flower just by the lengthening daylight hours. If they do start to send their pointy pixie hats up through their leaves, the tender seed stalks are just as edible, so don't give up on them immediately. When various members of the onion family do produce their pom-pom flowerheads, pick them young and use in salads, deep-fried in a light batter (chive flowers are excellent like this) or in a pie/stirfry/soup.

Once the spring onions send up their seed heads, don't give up on them and yank them out. Their seed stalks will dry off and fall over. Save the seed for sprouting seed or replanting and then have a close look at the onion. It'll be growing another baby onion or two up alongside the older one. So leave them where they are and they'll multiply. My spring onion patch has been like a Magic Pudding for years. Use the bigger onions to cook with and the young ones in salads. They are the easiest of the onion family to grow and just keep going all year, every year.

The garlic planted in autumn or June won't be ready to pull up until November or December. But if you've run out of last year's stored garlic, you can pull a leaf off here and there and chop these up in place



of garlic cloves. A friend plants the smaller bulbs as well to pull up to use their garlicky bulbs, shanks and leaves before the main plants are ready.

STINGING NETTLE

If you have a nearby patch of 'wasteland' that has rich high-nitrogen soil you'll probably have a thicket of stinging nettles. They are such an asset for all sorts of things — compost heaps, dried as a tonic for livestock and through winter and early spring they make the most delicious soup. Before they start to flower, pick a tubful of the tops with a pair of tongs (4–6 leaves down) or gloves and secateurs. Pack them in because they cook down. Make a soup using the nettles, a couple of spuds, onions or spring onions, salt, pepper, stock and a good pinch of sage (add more later if



Giant Yakumo snow peas.



The birth of a pea.

needed). Simmer together, add some milk at the end and then vitamise. Nettle was considered a spring tonic in European countries as it was one of the first greens to show after the snow melted. It's high in iron too.

PEAS

If you live in a warmer area with a manageable slug population, the peas that have been growing over mid/late winter will want to flower and form pea pods through spring. Or start them off in a length of guttering or other longish planter to start them safe from slug attack and plant out once they are a five or so centimetres tall.

ASPARAGUS

Once the asparagus bed is going strong (they need to be about three years old or more) you can cut the young fern spears



Spuds and snow peas.

for weeks. They'll just keep growing as quick as you can eat them. Snap off the tough end and lightly steam. Olive oil (genuine) or butter and salt is all that's needed, but a light sprinkling of chopped dill leaf or other young herb is also delish. You can make an asparagus quiche with all those eggs the chooks keep churning out too (they'll have been laying like billio since late June), or make a gourmet asparagus salad or pasta.

ROOT CROPS

All those beautiful plump sweet carrots, beetroot and parsnips that were at their prime in winter are now starting to toughen up underground ready to send up a tall seed stalk. If you're saving seed, find the best and biggest and mark them for seed producers. The others can have their heads sliced off under soil level and left until you need them. The Bower Birds taught me this. The carrots seem to stay suspended and don't toughen up or grow seed heads. One year I kept digging up perfectly good topless carrots through spring and into early summer. They were ones that had been eaten down by hungry birds at the end of winter.

BABY SPUDS AND A FEW QUICK SPRING CROPS

For quick salad greens, plant peas. But don't buy seed packets. A friend buys the edible dried peas. They are dwarf and when planted thickly only need minimal support — branchy twigs stuck in the soil are fine. Pick and use their tops as they grow. Pick the broad bean tops as well to chop into a salad. Borage, calendula and rocket flowers can be scattered into salads too.

If you've saved the seed from silverbeet, lettuce, spinach or rocket from last autumn, sow these thickly now to get a crop of mixed baby salad leaves happening.

Radishes are always a quick producer but use smaller ones for salads and older ones for cooking.

Carefully bandicoot the occasional new potato under the soil around late spring and leave the others to grow on.

And don't forget soaking seeds for 6 to 8 hours to use as sprouts. The small Pui or French lentils are perfect for this. Drain and keep them in a dark corner and only rinse them every second day or they'll tend to rot. They'll be ready to eat after about day four.

So the spring garden has fewer menu choices but that just shows that the rest of the year is a cornucopia of feasting!

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KING PHILIP

He's king of a very small empire. One wombat hole, so small and rocky that no other wombat wants it; one patch of grass to graze when no bigger wombat is around; a frog pond that a wombat can share. Best of all, four working paws.

Phil the wombat went through five operations on his leg before he came to us. He still doesn't have much feeling in his front paw. But it hasn't stopped him digging out three wheelbarrow loads of shale and rock to make his hole bigger, or scampering back into it faster than Phar Lap could gallop when larger wombats approach. For a wombat, that's true wealth.

Most of all, he doesn't worry about predators, meat eaters who might like to snack on wombat too. According to a recent study published in *New Scientist*: 'Scared to death: How intimidation changes ecosystems', (www.newscientist.com) even the scent of predators can change herbivores' behaviour, with 40 per cent fewer births when they can smell the presence of a carnivore. One reason the Epping Forest National Park, a sanctuary for hairy-nosed wombats, may have been so successful (200 individuals now instead of the 35 in the 1980s) is that wild dogs, dingos, cats (which can spread deadly toxoplasmosis, an infection that can make wombats too confused to survive) and foxes have been so successfully excluded. It also may explain why captive-breeding programs in zoos have been relatively unsuccessful. Their animals are surrounded by predators. Us.

Humans need security too. There was an article in the paper today suggesting that people my age (I like to think I'm in the lunch-time of life, verging on afternoon

tea) evaluate their wealth. I think they probably meant superannuation (with ads to encourage you to invest). But there are many much more profound forms of security than money.

For us: one house. Owner-built, which means it's strong, rodent-proof but not bushfire-proof, which is something we'd have attended to if we'd built in the past ten years. Forty years ago this area seemed relatively safe from bushfire. There has never been a major fire through this part of the valley, and we thought that a fire-retardant garden was all that was needed if a neighbour's burn off got out of control — but with climate change and more humans doing dumb things, the risk of a catastrophic (or even a really serious) fire is now real.

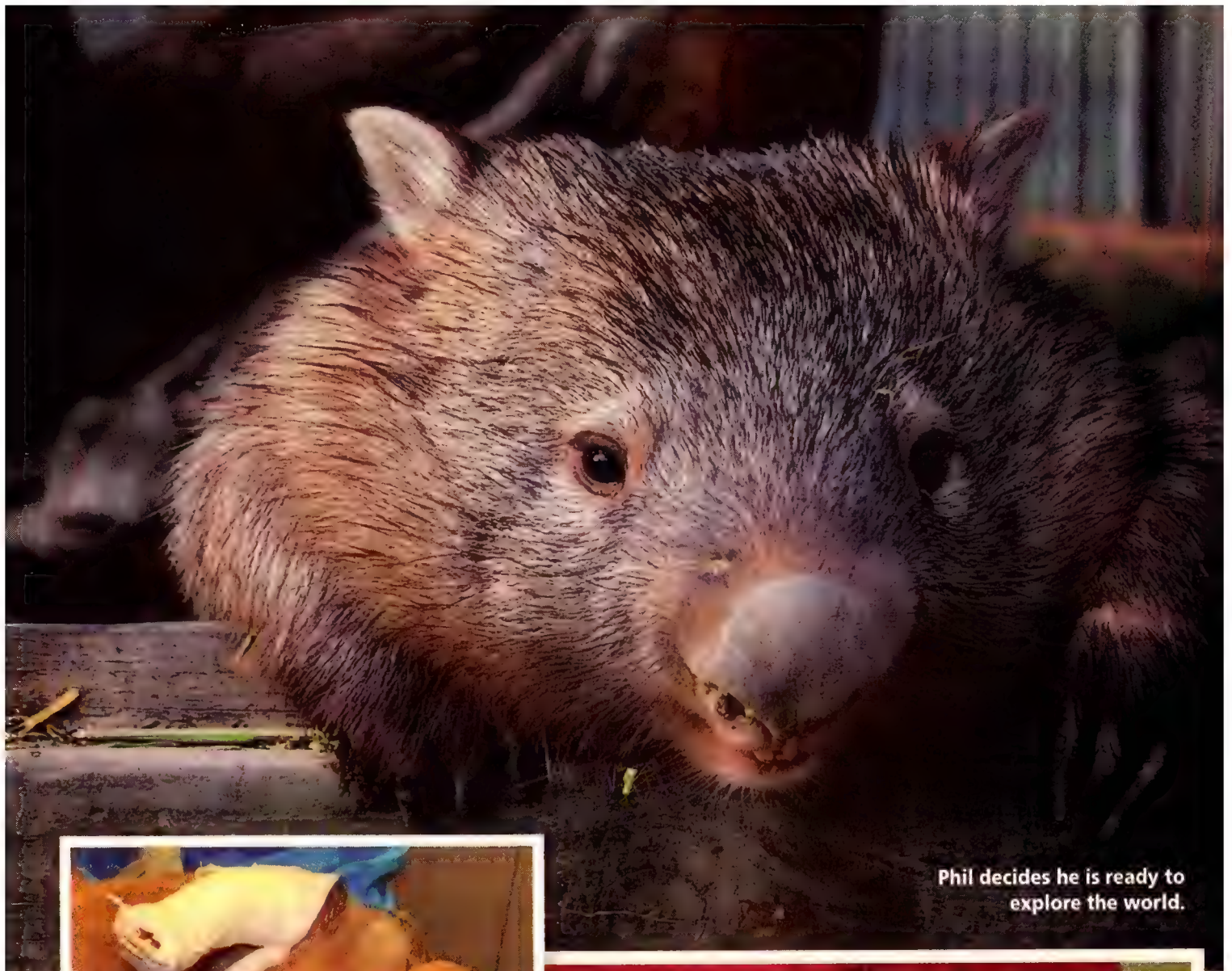
No mortgage to pay because the house, and its power system, was built bit by bit over 35 years. It's now finished about the same time as old bits need renewal. The willingness (okay, not all that willing) to live in a shed for five years, and a shed-in-transition to house for another decade, rather than spending on rent or interest payments, meant I was able to make a living writing, rather than in an office, and to take a lunch break down at the creek for two hours if the temperature or the kids urged it.

Quiet. If your house is buffeted by traffic noises, you'll soon get used to them — consciously — but your unconscious won't. People who live with constant noise are simply more stressed.

There's a corollary to this too. The more unpleasant

the noise you live with, the more you block out sounds — not just brake grinds and accelerator roars but the sounds of trees and the creakings as the roof expands on a hot day and the sound of rain on the roof or pavement.

Even the scent of predators can change herbivores' behaviour, with 40 per cent fewer births when they can smell the presence of a carnivore.



Phil decides he is ready to explore the world.



Phil the wombat as vet Dr Ralph Howard operates yet again on his paw, with the assistance of Philip Machin, from NARG. The Native Animal Rescue Group has a public fund and can accept tax-deductible donations. The bank details are: NARG NSW Public Fund; BSB 032 691; account 378067 and include your name as a reference. Email Shirley Lack (Treasurer) at babywombats@bigpond.com.

Right: Phil recovers in the loving arms of his NARG rescuers, Philip and Lesley Machin. Photos by Philip Machin of NARG.



You lose so many good sounds, because you have practised blocking out the bad ones for so long.

Fruit trees: an accumulation of trees over forty years, which fruit no matter what the weather, except during the bushfire alluded to above. (Even a typhoon is likely to sweep over our narrow valley).

Friends, motley assortment. A bit like a box of very good chocolates: friends for lunching with, friends who'll tell you, not too tactfully, it's time for a trip to the hairdresser; friends to commiserate — which is not the same as those trying to reorder your life, just help you cope with it; friends who bring soup and extremely good curries and who have lettuce/peaches/tomatoes when we don't.

Vegetable garden. It's a bit overgrown but Anne is dealing with it, suitable for feeding the family through meteor strike or revolution.

Time. No commuting. No looking for a parking spot in town. We sulk (briefly) if we can't get the spot directly outside Jeremy's supermarket or the Post Office. (I walk up a mountain or two most mornings but still dislike walking an extra two metres to shop.) Time to gossip in the supermarket line, which leads to ...

Community. When one of our family is wheeled into the hospital they usually know who, why and where to send the district nurse afterwards, plus what to gossip about to keep your mind off whatever emergency landed us there while we wait for the anesthetic to kick in. You can't buy that for quids.

Knowledge. This matters. It is not difficult to predict most natural disasters. The hardest step is to accept, both emotionally and intellectually, that they can happen, and that today may not always be like tomorrow. The Christchurch earthquake had been predicted for at least a decade, with warnings of a high magnitude earthquake in the South Island of New Zealand. Christchurch was built on swampy land that would be vulnerable in an earthquake.

When — not if — the sand dunes that line much of

the land south of Gosford are washed away in a once-in-a-hundred-year storm, and land that is below sea level reverts to the sea, most of that disaster will be man-made, too: by all of those complicit in the decisions that allowed people to build there.

It doesn't take enormous skill or experience to predict if a flood will come within the next ten, twenty or fifty years. Look for tide lines from previous floods, where the lightest debris has left a lace-like pattern on the ground. Look for debris caught in trees or shrubs. Wind knocks debris down; flood twists it into branches and twigs. If there's debris above ground level, water has flowed there, fast, and probably higher than the debris.

Look at the ground. Good soil in Australia is most often a sign of a flood plain — our continent had few glaciers to give us fertile grasslands like those of Europe and North America. Sand is carried by water, but it's often covered with a layer of silt, too. Layers of silt and sand are a warning.

But a flash flood can cover grassland. Look for boulders dropped where the water has carried them. Water rises from low land; it also cascades down from the heights. Even if you are above a valley floor a tide of water may roll onto you down the slope. Mostly, look at the records. Ask those who remember the land ten years ago, and then twenty and fifty years ago.

Look at the council maps to see where previous floods have been. The maps won't include all the areas that have once been flooded, but it can be surprising how much land that has had a major flood is now free to be built on.

Dig down a metre. Look for layers of silt, leaves, sand. Look for layers of charcoal, too. If a fire has passed your way before, it probably will again.

Look at the trees and shrubs. If they are species that survive fire, or even need it to germinate, your land is used to fire. Where fire has been, fire will come again. If, like us, your house is not fireproof (and fireproof houses can now be built) have a range of disaster plans

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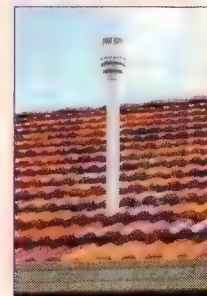
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that take in likely or even vaguely possible scenarios.

Security. Money is little use if it, or your life, can be taken by government or violence. Our chief wealth is the land in which we live: a large one, with relatively few people spread across it. Australians give generously of their own time and money when there are disasters. The wealthier a nation is, the more it's likely to cope with epidemics or recover from natural disasters.

Despite what you read in the newspapers, we are also pretty free from corruption: Australians are shocked when we hear of bribery, instead of shrugging and thinking it inevitable. By and large, too, we don't settle our disputes with guns and knives. There is no police force large enough to keep the peace if residents don't want it kept.

The greatest wealth of all is perhaps a life where you look at the sky for rainclouds, not missiles.

GRABBING HOLD OF SPRING

This is the growing time, the blossom time, the time to be lavish with fertiliser and water or as much as you can. With luck and good management, 80 per cent of your plants' annual growth will occur in spring.

This is the time to put in staples for the year ahead: enough tomatoes, potatoes, silver beet, parsley and

celery to see you through the next twelve months. It's also the time for the first plantings of corn and zucchini, beans and lettuce. It's the time to remember what does well and grow lots of it, and to think of at least one new veg you've never tried before.

This gets harder as you get older. We're already growing burdock (like nuttier, hardier parsnips); have rejected scorzonera (black salsify or oyster plant) and yacon (too crunchy) and occa, as it is too much work for the tiny tubers, and have become addicted to round zucchini, freckled beans and purple carrots.

This year we'll try Buttercrunch lettuce, said to be sweet even in the heat and just the right size for a salad for two, where one of us doesn't like lettuce and the other is a lettuce hog, as well as African cucumbers, said to be high yielding and heat resistant, in what will be the new, sunnier veggie garden by the house (our old veggie gardens are now semi-shaded gardens, due to the growth

spurt in the surrounding trees during the last, relatively moist, four years.

I accidentally ordered saltwort seeds — it's easy to make mistakes ordering online, or it is if you're dyslexic like me. So this year we'll be growing "a feathery traditional Japanese culinary herb with an appealing, crunchy texture, native to the salt marshes of Japan, but



Adventures in seed orders: is this what Jackie will harvest in a few weeks time? If it is, what will it taste like?

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well adapted to less saline soils. It is a quick growing annual that reaches between 20 and 45 cm high. Sow spring to mid-summer. Add tender young leaves to salads or steam longer stems. It is rich in vitamins and minerals, including vitamin A, calcium, and potassium. Days to harvest: 40 – 55.”

Which means by Christmas we may be saltwort devotees. Or not.

SWEET SUMMER GREENS

Summer greens are tricky beasts. Lettuces, chicory, dandelions, mustard greens — they can all turn bitter with too much heat. Broccoli, cabbages, bok choy, collards, mitsuba and mizuna *et al* go sulphurous, like a fart even before you digest them. Amaranth and celery sulk and turn tough. But summer is exactly the time when we need masses of salad greens, or a quick stirfry that won't heat up the kitchen.

There's the stalwart silver beet, that will grow no matter what the heat or cold, and taste of nothing much. But the best way to treat summer greens is to grow them good and fast, in the best-manured ground you have, watered with green manure tea once a week and their soil kept moist.

The most effective but labour-intensive way to grow baby greens is scattering the seed every fortnight or so in a small area, and snipping them when no taller than your little finger. There are salad seed mixes around, or make your own, with various lettuces, which I find better than the mixes as they are sweeter, and don't contain oxalate-rich spinach, sorrel, and red beet leaves, which can lead to a range of health problems if you eat too much of them, especially raw. Two large recycled boxes or one bathtub of 'micro lettuce' should give the family a daily salad, as long as they get watered every day or two, and fed at least every fortnight, or every week. The better you feed them, the better they'll feed you.

Otherwise, for grown up lettuce, choose the best varieties for your area — tropical lettuces or, further south, small ones like Buttercrunch or Red Mignonette or Freckles that will grow fast. The giant frilly lettuces that go by a range of names also seem to resist turning tough or bitter. Try to pick lettuces as soon as they heart, or are large enough for non-hearting varieties. The longer lettuce lingers in summer, the more likely it will turn bitter, slimy, slug-filled, or, at the least, less sweet.

The other solution for succulent greens is lots of mulch, not just to insulate the soil and keep moisture in, but loose, high up mulch that will half cover the lettuces, mizuna, chicory, celery *et al*. It needs to be LOOSE —

scattered stalky lucerne mulch is ideal — or it can cook or rot the veg it surrounds, and is definitely not suited to areas of high heat and humidity. But half-buried summer celery will be tender and delightful, and parsley stems won't be stringy as an old bootlace.

Last generation's gardeners often wrapped celery stems in newspaper, tied up with string, with only the green leaves poking out the top, to keep it pale, pale green and incredibly tender, but these days we are used to the darker green, stringier celery available at the shops, and don't bother.

Chicory, dandelions and other greens were also topped with an old flowerpot for a week or three, to encourage tender, sweet, pale shoots. Asparagus was blanched with at least 30 cm of light mulch, like lucerne hay, to get prized soft green to cream stems.

I'm not advocating we all do this — and I prefer my asparagus green, with bite. But if you think your lettuces are turning mean and bitter, try the loose mulch trick. And after years of consigning our celery to the soup pot, I've discovered the delights of a chopped celery salad, and for that you either need to spend an hour pulling off the strings, or do the newspaper wrap. It doesn't take long and, my word, you get gorgeous celery. Then in late summer put in your brassicas again, broccoli, collards, cabbage, caulies *et al*, English spinach, corn salad, big hearted lettuces, and let the cooler weather keep them sweet.

SNAFFLING EXTRA WARMTH AND SPEED

Our garden has slowly been getting shadier as the trees grow, and just being in a deep, narrow valley means that sunlight is severely rationed anyway. Valleys also retain warmth, and shelter you and crops from cold winds, but after last summer's grey drizzly days our tomatoes decided not to fruit till late March and even then with a stingy one or two a day, not the baskets full of abundance that allows for daily tomato soup, tomato sauce and cartons of frozen chopped tomatoes — whizz ripe tomatoes in the blender, freeze in small containers. I've tried freezing them whole, but while this works beautifully for nectarines and plums — thaw and stew — for some reason freezing makes tomato skins turn into plastic.

One way to snaffle extra sun is to build above-ground gardens, especially one with thin galvanised iron walls, like chunks of tank, where the winter's cold soil can heat up quickly. The disadvantage is that it cools down fast too, and drains all too well, so you need extra watering, unless you make or buy a wicking garden,



The most effective way to grow baby greens is to scatter seed every fortnight or so in a small area, and snip them when no taller than your little finger.

where a plastic base holds the water in a layer of gravel (not soil — waterlogged soil turns sour). The roots grow deep into the moisture.

After years of using smaller greenhouses, like plastic bottles with their bottoms cut out, I've come to value large ones, a bit like a dog house made of glass or plastic, that you can move to the tomatoes or cucumbers or whatever else needs warmth.

Our new garden backs on to a water tank, for reflected heat. It's also small enough to drape plastic over the wallaby-proof fence and, hopefully, that will encourage the tomatoes to ripen by Christmas.

I'm also hunting for lengths of aluminium flue pipe. I reckon if I grow tomatoes tied to them the reflected light will give us at least another fortnight of fruit.

We could go all out and surround our gardens with gravel, or even concrete or paving — heat reflective and retaining — or terrace the slopes with stone or brick walls, for the same effect. Or build a glass house, or a floating garden in a dam, if we had a dam, or even soil suitable to build a dam.

Or perhaps after forty years of coaxing tomatoes I should accept that our valley grows better avocados than solanums — avocados thrive with restricted sun and no cold winds — and swap the excess avos for

tomatoes and pumpkins from sunnier gardens.

This year's pumpkins and melons are going to go on the emergency driveway to the house, the one left in case we need to deliver a bed or finally get rid of the giant, century-old couch with a lumpy seat. If there is a real emergency the firetruck or ambulance can drive over the pumpkins (or kick them out of the way) and we are unlikely to get the six muscular bodies with the spare six hours it will take to manoeuvre the sofa out the door. Come to think of it, the sofa was already in the (smaller) house before we put on the front door. Unless we take an axe to it, the sofa is here to stay, still sturdy, perhaps restuffed and then recovered. (They don't make them like that anymore. Or as big, either.)

If you don't intend to use your driveway this summer, the middle bit can often make a good sunny garden for pumpkins or melons that tolerate dryness, or sweet potatoes if the strip is fertile, or you can pile on compost and plant any other any crop that needs a lot of sun and can be hauled out when needed.

Phil the wombat may be annoyed that part of his kingdom will vanish under pumpkins. But the pumpkins will wander through the grass, and when they die down in winter the grass will be there for him, a small happy wombat, in his kingdom.

FARMERS' MARKET

Snapshot



Haydee and her friend's son Blake. "It is so important for children to become aware of where their food is coming from", Haydee says.

GOLD COAST NOURISHMENT FOR YOUNG AND OLD

BY HAYDEE PAYER

Gold Coast, Queensland

I ABSOLUTELY LOVE farmers' markets. Passion is a word I use to describe my zest and enthusiasm for supporting local farmers and living a nourishing life. I have created my very own blog to share this passion with the world! (Go to www.haydeepayer.com.au.)

Here on the glorious Gold Coast we are bustling with farmers' markets from Palm Beach to Main Beach and Burleigh Heads to Miami (Miami Markets are strictly 100 per cent organic).

I would love to share my local community's farmers' market with you. The Burleigh Heads Farmers' Markets are held every Saturday morning from 7 am till noon at the Burleigh Heads State School on the Lower Gold Coast Highway.

You'll find an array of fresh seasonal produce and handcrafted delights, fresh flowers and plants. The local growers are always happy to share gardening and cooking tips. You will also find fresh seafood (here is where I pick up NT wild-caught barramundi), a butcher, a baker and certainly a candlestick maker. Out on the school oval the stalls are not essentially organic; however, most farmers advise what is spray-free, unwaxed and pesticide-free.

An absolute gem and a must visit for all your organic needs at the Burleigh markets is the LOHAS (Lifestyles of Health and Sustainability) precinct. LOHAS is located inside the school hall. On entering the hall you will discover

fresh organic produce, health practitioners and tea makers. Food stalls such as Raw Connections present delightful mouthwatering bites (www.rawconnections.com.au).

There is an organic brown rice sushi stall along with a café serving fresh juices, coffee and healthy food options such as acai breakfast bowls. Further to this, LOHAS runs smart living workshops educating the community with fabulous topics such as green living, building and energy usage around the home and smarter transportation ideas. It's a complete positive-planet approach to nutrition, mind and body, transport and building and green living!

You can check out LOHAS precinct here: <http://lifechangingevents.net.au/wp/portfolio-items/lohas-precinct/> and for further information on LOHAS in Australia check out: <http://www.lohas.com.au>.

FARMERS' MARKET SNAPSHOT

Don't you just love a good Farmers' Market? Email us a photo of your favourite Farmers' Market. It might feature some great produce, a child eating an organic ice cream, a colourful stallholder, or ...

Include any information you have on market dates, opening times, and a web address for any readers wanting to visit. If we print your photo, we'll send you a \$50 voucher from The Good Life Book Club. Email your photo to Fiona — editorial@earthgarden.com.au — with "Farmers' Market Snapshot" in the subject line. Please send us your very best, high-resolution photo. Happy snapping!



THE Good Life

BOOKS & TOOLS

For Simpler, Greener, Healthier Lifestyles • Issue 32 Spring & Summer 2013

WELCOME to the spring issue of the Good Life! After the chill of winter and frosted mornings at our office in Central Victoria we are eager to welcome in the new season – perhaps with some camping, building a coop for spring chickens or some experimental baking in the kitchen!

We hope you will enjoy the new look of our catalogue featuring the high quality new titles and tools you have come to expect from us in a more compact though more frequent format. Please browse our website for more books, seeds and products www.goodlifebookclub.com

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Here's all the equipment needed to make 10 litres of fresh yoghurt at home, yum! Kit contains culture, sterile storage container, thermometer, instructions and recipe booklet.

**FRESH CHEESE COMPLETE KIT****\$64.00**

Here's the perfect way to get started making cheese. Ideal for beginners this kit contains everything you need to make Feta, Halloumi, Cottage Cheese, Cream Cheese and other cheeses. If you've been dreaming of making your own fresh cheese here's the perfect way to start. Kit contains; muslin, moulds, steriliser, culture, rennet, thermometer, instructions, recipe booklet and more.

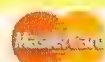
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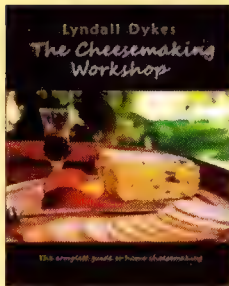
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The complete guide to home cheesemaking
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Lyndall Dykes is passionate about homemade and sustainable food and takes workshops on cheesemaking around Australia. With easy to follow step by step recipes to over 20 cheeses ranging from camembert and blue vein through to fetta, haloumi, ricotta, cheddar and four types of goats cheese this is a truly complete guide. This book is spiral bound making it easier to read in the kitchen and includes plenty of mouth-watering recipes that will showcase your homemade cheese! 250 pages, paperback.



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This book contains 100 truly quick and easy recipes covering breakfasts, health-giving beverages, soups, starters, mains and desserts for the raw food lifestyle. The dazzlingly colourful photographs alone will make you drool. The helpful introduction includes information on nutrition, how to avoid cravings, the best options for your pantry and advice on kitchen equipment to make your life easier. Written by a passionate raw food advocate, this book will inspire you to live radiantly! 176 pages, paperback.



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A chicken coop can sometimes be a messy eyesore but this book proves it can be a contemporary, clean and well-designed statement of self-sufficiency! Part grand design and part building manual, this book details 14 different structures ranging in size, location and purpose; there is surely one to suit your yard or get the creative juices flowing to design your own! 191 pages, paperback.



THE GOOD LIFE LAB

Radical experiments in hands-on living
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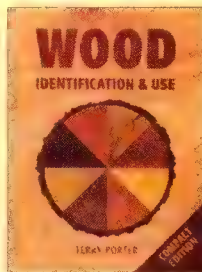
Tremayne and her partner live in what's called the 'waste stream' by avoiding buying anything new and re-purposing discarded goods. They established a lifestyle more abundant than they ever dreamed possible when they quit their corporate jobs in New York City to build a new house in an abandoned trailer park in New Mexico. With colour photographs of their endeavours and artwork punctuating the chapters this inspirational memoir is sure to be a treasured object for anyone pursuing the 'Good Life'! 318 pages, paperback.



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This book is an indispensable guide to the most important timber species in use around the world today. More than 200 species are described in detail with plenty of coloured illustrations to help you identify each tree. With a species per page outlining seasoning requirements, working properties, typical uses and safety considerations this is a handy addition for anyone interested in woodworking; 287 pages, paperback.

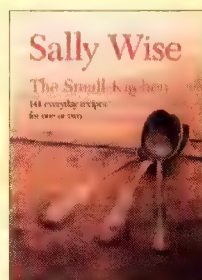


THE SMALL KITCHEN

141 everyday recipes for one or two

Sally Wise
\$24.95

Well known broadcaster and cooking writer Sally Wise returns with another book that is sure to be a helpful favourite. Delicious new recipes and tried and true favourites have been finely tuned to accommodate smaller households. This book includes helpful information on storing produce, a reference table of substitutions to save you money and ideas for leftovers accompanying each recipe. 206 pages, paperback.



HOW TO RAISE GOATS

Everything you need to know

Carol Amundson
\$19.95

This book is an in depth reference for anyone considering raising goats detailing breeds and coat types to milking and harvesting fibre. The author has been raising goats since 1989 and although written for an American audience this book highlights important factors to consider including travel, health problems, vaccinations and how to prepare your property for keeping and breeding goats. 198 pages, paperback



WHOLEFOOD BAKING

Jude Blereau
\$44.95

With over 120 fail-safe recipes using whole flours and natural sweeteners, this is the ideal cookbook for those with allergies or intolerances who still want to enjoy cakes, scones biscuits and pastries. Together with advice on how to convert your favourite recipes using whole ingredients and a reference of baking ingredients and what they do this book has a wealth of knowledge for those seeking healthier versions of their favourite baked treats. 288 pages, paperback.



THE VEGAN SCOOP

Wheeler Del Torro
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This book is about good health and good taste with rich and creamy desserts that can be enjoyed by vegans and those with dairy aversions. This vegan ice cream guru shares his recipes with enthusiasm by introducing you to the ingredients as well as churning methods. Flavours begin with the classics but move through to the experimental with fruity, asian, Caribbean, novelty and aphrodisiac varieties! With concoctions such as coconut and lemongrass or chocolate martini sorbet this book also includes 2 chapters on toppings and sauces. All you need to start your own frozen dessert adventure! 240 pages, paperback.



Birds of Australia

David Burnie

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This is a wonderfully compact and comprehensive guide to over 400 species of Australian birds. Starting with bird anatomy, flight, migration, habitats and identification techniques this book makes an excellent field guide. Listed by family group each bird has profiled information, family name, map of distribution and a detailed description of characteristics along with vivid photography. With the astounding number of Australian species such as Gamebirds, Mound builders, Penguins, Albatross, Storks, Boobies, Bustards, Doves and Pigeons, Bee eaters, Kingfisher, Honeyeaters, Parrots, Birds of Prey and many more the thing that sets this book apart is the spectacular photography. 352 pages, travel format, paperback.



Sabrina's Juicy Little Book Of Citrus

Sabrina Hahn

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No plants generate more questions than citrus — and gardening writer and broadcaster Sabrina Hahn has the answers.

This compact book includes green and practical solutions to the most common problems including grafting, soil preparation, pots and cuttings. Covering lemons, limes, grapefruits, kumquats, oranges, and much more this book brings together lots of useful information to keep the citrus in your garden happy, healthy and productive! 144 pages, paperback.



Australian Fungi Illustrated

I.R McCann

\$24.95

This is a compact illustrated guide, with over 400 species presented in full colour. With most examples presented as close as possible to their actual size and each picture dated and notated with its location and common name this would make a very handy guide in the field. Land managers, naturalists and bushwalkers will find this book an invaluable reference. 128 pages, paperback.



My Dog Has Arthritis

-but lives life to the full!

Gill Carrick

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Over a fifth of dogs contract arthritis and this book can help you understand what your best friend is experiencing when they can't tell you themselves. With expert input from vets, surgeons and specialists in complimentary therapies the areas covered include; types of canine arthritis; the importance of early diagnosis and treatments available. This book includes tips for how to manage canine arthritis as well as many case studies. 80 pages, paperback.

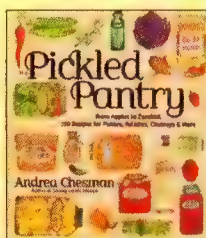


Pickled Pantry

Andrea Chesman

\$24.95

This beautifully presented book will get everyone excited about preserving. With detailed information on the most preferable ingredients, equipment and methods and over 150 recipes for pickles, relishes, fermented krauts, chutneys and more this is a comprehensive guide. With troubleshooting hints to get the crispest results the book also includes recipes for over 36 delicious ways to use your pickles in prepared dishes. Never waste a big harvest again as there is sure to be a pickle for every palate. 304 pages, paperback.



Build Your Own Beekeeping Equipment

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Take your apiary to the next level! Detailed instructions for 35 building projects include every part of the hive such as 8- and 10- frame hives, various feeders and swarm catchers. The large A4 format and well-drawn diagrams make for easy reading. Unfortunately written for an American audience the measurements are imperial but there is an abundance of useful tips from the author who is an experienced beekeeper. 160 pages, paperback.



The Speedy Vegetable Garden

Mark Diacono & Lia Leendertz

\$21.95

Sprouts can be grown from seed and micro greens cropped on your windowsill in as little as a few days. Discover the tastiest baby vegetables and new breeds of fast-germinating varieties that put food on your plate in record time. This book describes the techniques of speedy cropping from seed sprouting in jars, trays and bags to sowing salad leaves for a summer-long harvest. Clear to follow with striking illustrative photographs this book also contains recipes to best enjoy your rapid harvest. 207 pages, paperback.

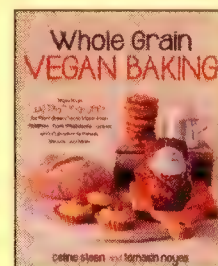


Whole Grain Vegan Baking

Celine Steen and Tamasin Noyes

\$24.95

Do wholegrain flours intimidate you? Fear no more! This book holds more than 100 recipes using whole grain flours and natural sweeteners empowering you to indulge in wholesome breads, muffins, pies, pancakes, cupcakes, biscuits and other treats. With a helpful introduction to all the whole grain components, why not try Cinnamon Raisin Rye Bagels or Caramel Nut Barley Squares? Your waistline, your friends and the planet will adore you! 176 pages, paperback.

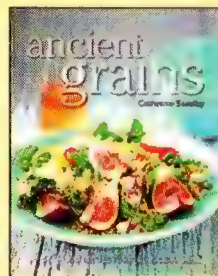


Ancient Grains

Catherine Saxelby

\$34.95

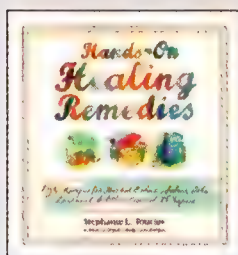
We all know that processed foods lack the nutritional goodness of whole-grains but how to prepare them with confidence and flavour? Beginning with a useful directory of grains including Chia, Sorghum, Teff, Wild Rice, Buckwheat, Amaranth, Quinoa, Barley and Millet this title discusses history, nutrition and cooking advice. Containing more than 100 recipes, including dishes for vegans, vegetarians and meat lovers as well as many low-GI and gluten-free meals this book is sure to update your dinner table. Over 60 stunning full-colour photographs, 208 pages, paperback.



Hands-On Healing Remedies

Stephanie L Tourles
\$22.95

Easy to read and alphabetically organised this beautifully presented book covers 150 recipes for herbal balms, salves, oils, liniments and other topical therapies. Putting you in control of your own medicine cabinet this extensive book outlines the tools of the trade needed to address many medical concerns. These recipes are easy to prepare from readily available and natural ingredients and are historically proven to soothe everything from backaches and blisters to insect bites and insomnia. With masses of interesting information you will be eager to start your own herbal home apothecary. 320 pages, paperback.



Meals In A Jar

Julie Languille
\$18.95

Pull it off the shelf, mix with water, heat and serve! Sounds good? With a little planning you can stock your pantry or camping kit with ready-made meals. Detailing how to prepare dehydrated and pressure canned recipes this book outlines all the ingredients, equipment and supplies required. Please note as this book is written for an American audience some of the components featured may not suit our Australian tastes (grits anyone?). However, many of the ideas inside are much healthier than store bought options and may inspire you to create your own freeze dried favourites. 175 pages, paperback.



Back Yard Farmer #12

Earth Garden
\$19.95

It's official! Back Yard Farmers want to have their cake and eat it too! That'll be a homemade carrot cake perhaps? They'll likely grow their own ingredients – beautiful sweet carrots from healthy soil, freshly laid hens' eggs and maybe even some handpicked walnuts or home-harvested honey. Some will even whip the cream from real milk given from an actual cow. Why settle for supermarket woes when a rich world of making, cooking, keeping and growing is within your reach? In fact you're holding it in your hands right now! This book will give you plenty of bang for your backyard farming buck. No matter whether you're living on the land, or in the suburbs or in a city – we can all get stuck into some backyard farming whatever shape, form or fancy. Get ready to dig in, grow and share in the harvest with the next instalment of this well loved series! 80 pages.



Backyard Poultry – Naturally

Alanna Moore
\$38.50

This is a very highly regarded chook textbook, with wonderful colour pictures to illustrate natural chook care themes. It's not easy to find good, natural poultry care books in Australia — this one will answer all your questions and enthuse, entertain and encourage you. 151 pages.



Earth Gardener's Companion Third Edition

Jackie French

\$19.95

Jackie needs no introduction as Australia's favourite organic gardener, and her hard-to-find book has now been fully updated and revised. It's a month-by-month guide to what you can do in any organic garden: planting, harvesting, weed control, pest control recipes and more. For any month of the year you'll never be stumped for garden action again. B&W, 80 pages.



Backyard Beekeeping 2nd edition

Courtenay N Smithers
\$19.95

This fully updated and revised Australian book is written for those wanting to keep a hive or two of bees and enjoy the delicious rewards of eating your own honey. The author shares his passion and extensive knowledge of beekeeping by providing essential information for both beginner and experienced beekeepers including; the life of the bee, basic equipment, positioning hives, harvesting honey, swarm control and more. A comprehensive and easy to follow reference for keeping healthy bees. Some colour photos. 80 pages.



Pest-repellent Plants Second Edition

Penny Woodward
\$29.95

In this much expanded new edition this book provides practical and sensible information that shows you how to control problem pests in the garden with simple and safe methods, tactics and sprays. Described in the two A-Z lists are 'pest repellent plants and other organic remedies' followed by the A-Z of pests. 152 pages, colour photos, paperback.



The Healthy Soil Handbook

\$19.95

This book will show you how organic gardeners are feeding their families and more. Fertile compost, nitrogen-rich soil, earthworms galore, mulching for waterwise gardening — all producing healthy vegetables, fruits and herbs. Full colour, 80 pages.



Easy Aquaponics

\$19.95

Imagine a delicious meal made from your own flourishing organic vegies and herbs and freshly caught fish all harvested from your very own backyard. If you want to put it all together yourself using recycled material — there are plenty of examples, tips and advice. Full colour, 80 pages.



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People in our cities and towns are creating and sharing more localised food sources as well as building stronger communities. Jam packed with great ideas, gorgeous colour photography and permaculture inspired productive and healthy food production. City bees, goats and chooks feature alongside vertical urban gardens, food forests, compost plus much more. 96 pages, full colour, paperback.



City Permaculture Earth Garden \$19.95

Read real life stories about permaculture in the city and the good life in the middle of town. Learn how to choose the right species to plant, the right time of year to plant food, how to prepare your courtyard, balcony or even nature strip so you can enjoy growing your own food. Full colour. 96 pages.



Jackie French's Chook Book

Jackie French \$21.95

This handy book has lots of advice and clever ideas to manage flocks, and includes lots of chicken and egg recipes. 120 pages.



Weed Forager's Handbook

Adam Grubb &
Annie Raser-Rowland
\$21.95

Can I really eat that? Chickweed? Mallow? Sow Thistle? This is an amazing book! You will have completely changed your view of weeds after reading this. No longer will weeds look like hours of hard work to remove and control; now they'll start to look more like a tasty lunch or nutritious supper. Twenty top favourite edible and medicinal Australian weeds are featured with excellent photos for identification, descriptions of the plants, their uses and history. Other weeds also get mention, plus there are sensible rules to follow when foraging, weedy recipes and other weedy benefits. The sub-title speaks for itself – An essential gardener's handbook. 168 pages, full colour, paperback



Moon Calendar

J & R Scott
\$15.00

The benefits of gardening by the moon have been known for thousands of years. Just as the moon influences the rise and fall of the tides, so it is that plants, having a high water content, are also influenced by the moon phases. This perpetual 'Moon Calendar' unlocks the secrets of the lunar cycles with easy-to-follow directions on the right time to plant, when to fertilise, when to cultivate and even when to fish. A4 laminated chart/wheel.



The Art of Fermentation

Sandor Elliz Katz
\$51.95

This huge book of 500 pages is an incredible and inspiring work – a fermentos dream! Rather than focus on a traditional recipe format as such, Sandor offers the concept and methods of different ferments from around the world with lots of practical information instead. The aim is teaching us to understand the hows and whys of fermentation so new recipes and new ideas can be explored. Michael Pollan writes in his foreword: "When it's late at night and quiet in the house, I can hear my ferments gurgling contentedly. It's become a deeply pleasing sound because it means my microbes are happy." Everything you need to know about fermenting vegetables, fruits, grains, milk, beans, meats and more is here in this exceptional and comprehensive book. A must have for the kitchen. 500 pages, hard cover.



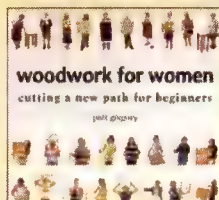
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Ross Dobson
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Do you need to clear out your fridge, freezer or pantry? Here's an eclectic mix of recipes for lots of items you'll find in there. Is the frozen spinach close to its use by date? All the recipes are easy to make – just find the kitchen staples you want to use and select the recipe to suit. 114 pages, b&w, hard cover



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Earth Garden
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Wood Oven Recipes

Edited by Alan Gray
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Learn how to cook a whole range of perfect entrées, main courses, desserts, pastries and breads in the first book totally devoted to wood oven cooking. This book is jam-packed with tips and advice to ensure your pizza party, weekend baking session or whole fish roast-up goes perfectly. Every recipe is accompanied by a 'hot tip' specific to wood oven cooking and each dish has been oven-tested by our expert contributors. 80 pages full colour.



Lessons In Happiness From The Third World

Pete Jensen
\$29.95

Learn how to avoid and overcome depression, anxiety and stress, and begin a new life of purpose, meaning and real happiness with the principles in this book. Based on three key ingredients: Community, Purpose and Gratitude, Pete Jensen explores how the West has forgotten how to be happy and how we can learn to be more resilient, overcome procrastination and indifference, and lead happy, energised and fulfilling lives at home and work. Lots of practical and easy to apply advice. 206 pages, b&w, paperback.



Holy Shit

Gene Logsdon
\$22.95

This isn't a 'how to' book but a very thought provoking look at manure – where it comes from, how to get the most and best use from each different animal type (and human) and where it comes from. Gene Logsdon argues that manures are worth billions of dollars as fertiliser and we can't afford to keep throwing away this underused and undervalued free resource. Lots of tips on improving soil with manures. Whilst essentially written for the American market, Australian farmers and backyarders will find this book easy to read, entertaining and inspiring. 208 pages, b&w, paperback.



Orders over \$200 will receive TWO FREE BOOKS

Even More Chook Wisdom

Earth Garden Books \$19.95

Let 'Even More Chook Wisdom' show you how to step into the charming world of back yard chook keeping. This volume, the third in a major series from 'Earth Garden' brings the old-time secrets of Australian chook keepers to your bookshelf, your backyard and your kitchen table. Learn how to make your own chook pen, breed your own chooks, help them thrive, integrate them into your garden routines and entertain you – all while they give you a regular supply of organic food. This book is a rare gem – for less than the price of three-dozen free-range eggs, you can be starting on your own chook wrangling journey. 80 pages, full colour paperback.



More Chook Wisdom Earth Garden \$19.95

'More Chook Wisdom' is the companion volume to the highly-successful 'Chook Wisdom'. In this book there's natural health care, tips on chook pens to build or buy, and best of all, loads of user experiences from people living the chook lifestyle right here and now. 80 pages full colour.

The Earth Garden Water Book \$19.95

Learn how to slash your water bill while helping the environment. Topics include how to store and purify rainwater, reusing greywater and choosing a composting toilet. From now on, saving water is easy and rewarding. 128 pages, B&W.



Natural Home 5 Earth Garden \$19.95

Whether you're in the middle of our biggest cities, or high on a hill in the scrub 'Natural Home 5' will motivate, educate and encourage you along the road to creating your own sustainable homes and place. From strawbale to mudbrick, stone and recycled timber – it's all here to show you why you should hire the builder, hire the architect, or do it all yourself. 80 pages, full colour.



Natural Home Builder Vols 1 – 4 (The Stack) \$50.20 or \$19.95 each

These books can help with a little inspiration, encouragement and some fresh, wholesome ideas. Learn how other people are taking the steps to create inspired, exciting and attractive homes that reflect their individual tastes, and their commitments to treading more lightly on the earth. Each book full colour, 80 pages.



Back Yard Farmer Volumes 3-11 \$19.95 each

or The Swag – any six issues (1-11) \$87.00

Need some inspiration and some practical know-how? Everything is here – from free-ranging your chooks and milking your cows to growing vegies from seed to DIY hydroponics. Back yard farmers everywhere are enjoying the fruits of their labours and now they share their bountiful harvests with you. Each book 80 pages, full colour.

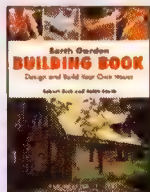
Home Farmer Volumes 1 & 2 \$13.50 each

These volumes present the stories of ordinary Australians showing how they turned suburban blocks into gardens of Eden and how they took the rural exit off the rat-race freeway. Each book 80 pages, B&W.



Earth Garden Building Book Bob Rich & Keith Smith \$49.95

This edition of the all-time classic Australian owner builder's bible has a new chapter on strawbale building by John Glassford. Learn how to design and build your own natural home from mudbrick, stone, timber or strawbale. Includes mountains of practical building advice and techniques. 328 pages.



Chook Wisdom Earth Garden Books \$19.95

This practical book is written by Australian chook keepers, and it's crammed with superb colour photos of the most popular breeds. Whether you already have chooks, or you're thinking of keeping them – for the eggs, for meat, as 'gardeners', or simply for the sheer delight of having them as pets and part of your backyard landscape. 80 pages full colour.



Build Your Own Wood Fired Oven Alan Watt \$24.95

This book shows how to build your wood fired oven with illustrations and many excellent colour photographs and line drawings. There are sections on oven bases and different types of ovens ranging from low tech to high tech and the traditional brick dome oven. Then follow sections on chimneys and dampers, casting a chimney, and doors and doorways. Finally there's a section of recipes, with photos of dishes which display the diversity of wood fired ovens. 112 pages.



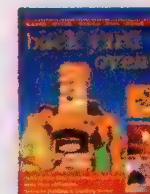
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Earth, brick, stone, fire, food, this book has it all with colourful photos to guide you through every chapter, from wood oven tips to building a clay cob oven. There is also a chapter on brick, stone and cement ovens and finally the last chapter has the fabulous wood fired recipes for you to try. 80 pages, full colour.



Back Yard Ovens Earth Garden \$19.95

The most comprehensive Australian back yard oven-building book yet, takes a look at over 25 ovens. If you have ever imagined a backyard oven at your place, or if you want to know how to use one, this full colour book is the inspiration for you. 80 pages, full colour.



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About the Good Life

The Good Life Book Club is printed on 100% plantation-grown paper, and the Good Life Team have been involved with sustainable-living books and magazines which have been in continuous publication in Australia for more than 40 years.

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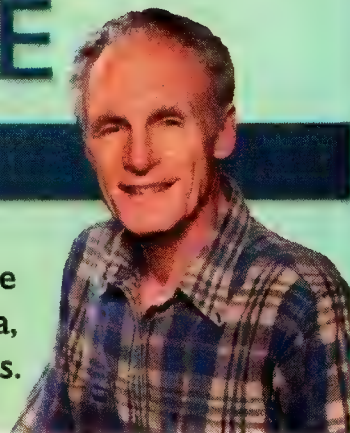
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PERMACULTURE

IN HINDSIGHT

Derided, then ignored, and finally obvious to all. All too often that's the melancholy fate of innovative ideas. Bruce Hedge, of Newham, Victoria, reflects on the teachings of one of Australia's pioneering agriculturalists.



You never change things by fighting the existing reality. To change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete.

— R Buckminster Fuller

AND THAT'S exactly what Permaculture has done. I've done a bit of contemplating lately. It's funny that after 35 years of designing, implementing, observing, and modifying our little effort to try and live lighter on this Earth it's hard to imagine a life without the influence Permaculture has had on us. In so many ways. For instance: COMPOST!! In the last issue, I made a mental note to myself that the next major purchase would be a heavy duty chipper/mulcher/shredder. I borrowed one a couple of years ago from friends Howard and Julie, and was reluctant to return it! Over a month or so wwoofers helped us make a couple of cubic metres of wonderful compost, with a perfect carbon/nitrogen ratio, which was absorbed immediately by our hungry soil. (Remember: feed the soil, not the plant.)

As part of our original Permaculture design, we'd planted hundreds of tagasaste (Tree Lucerne) and wattles in shelterbelts all around the property. Over the years, we realised that here was a living haystack ready to be used as a perfect fertiliser for fruit trees and vegetable plots. But our first attempts to use cut branches *in situ* as a mulch met with some problems. Like dead, dry sticks all through the place, creating a fire hazard, and unwanted weeds like blackberries popping up in between. Twenty years ago, I sought out a suitable heavy duty chipper/mulcher but couldn't afford the \$3000 at the time. A couple of months ago, thanks to eBay, and Chinese manufacturing, I came across an 18 HP electric start machine for under \$900 delivered, and thought I'd take a chance. To say I'm impressed is an understatement. It seems very well built, and is one amazing addition to our property. Over a couple of days, wwoofers Dennis and Susie harvested tagasaste and wattle stems up to 80 mm diameter, and fed them through the chutes,



The new chipper – lovely to behold.



PA Yeomans, 1978



Yeomans' Bunyip chisel plough in action.



A cubic metre of wonderful garden food in front of the berry house.

producing four cubic metres of wonderful sweet compost. A month later it was ready to grace our newly double-dug vegetable beds. I'm looking forward so much to this year's garden.

Alice and I were talking the other night about the quote by Buckminster Fuller at the top of the column.

In the 1970s we heard about Keyline principles. PA Yeomans tried to change the (agricultural) world in the

1960s, but few listened. He devised a concept of landscape design which, if implemented widely, could have drought-proofed Australia's food bowls, and also prevented, or at least slowed, the spread of bushfires. In the '50s, '60s and '70s, he designed properties, and invented a revolutionary chisel plough, which he named the 'Bunyip Slipper Imp with Shakeaerator'. This plough, when pulled along a specific pattern of just-off-contour lines, opened up the soil without inversion, allowing any rain to go straight to the root zone and minimise erosion. After he died in 1984, the young Permaculture movement here in Australia helped keep his ideas alive. Bill Mollison championed his broad scale designs, and called him "one of Australia's greatest patriots".

In the '70s, Mollison and Holmgren rekindled interest in Yeomans' ideas, incorporating some of them into their Permaculture concept. But mainstream Australia agriculture never really warmed to Yeomans' vision.

One of the greatest visionaries of all, EF Schumacher, the author of *Small is Beautiful*, said that Yeomans' ideas possessed the "perfect beauty of truth" (Introduction to *Forest Farming*, by J Sholto Douglas).

A Keyline practice we remember being intrigued by was the careful timing of grazing. I first heard about the effect on the plant of being cut or grazed back then and it fascinated me. The result of precise timing of grazing is a huge increase in production of pasture, deeper roots,



Water flowing from a 'flagged' Keyline channel.

more diversity of healthy pasture species, and faster and healthier growth of animals. It's like magic! No increase in inputs of water or fertiliser, yet much more output, by aligning the grazing to the growth pattern of the plants.

A couple of years ago Alice went to a local Landcare meeting at Newham Hall. The topic wasn't really one that interested her much at the time but she felt like a social evening that Friday, with our lovely local community. The talk was about growing pasture for raising beef cattle. She tells me: "I was amazed when the presenter explained a system of grazing that utilised the principles we'd learnt about 40 years ago from Yeomans!"

Complete with dramatic slides it showed the effects of the same pasture being grazed in strips in a timed way that encouraged growth and one that was grazed continuously. Production statistics were also presented. The contrast from one side of the fence to the other was startling. Lush growth and much more net production on the timed strip grazed section and damaged pasture of limited species with many weeds and much less production on the continuously grazed side. The other startling thing: this careful timing of grazing is now the norm for all well-educated beef producers! Why not? It's much more profitable and less costs are involved. It's encouraging to see that good ideas are adopted provided that their usefulness can be demonstrated.

In Central Victoria, there is a beautiful example of sustainable agriculture, which provides a model for

small farms. Taranaki Farm, near Woodend, practises follow-on pasture management and has regular open days. Their management systems were partly devised by Darren Doherty, who keeps the Keyline message alive in the southern states. Darren's work is documented well in a set of YouTube videos I came across while researching this column.

MORE INFORMATION

We live in a wonderful country. We have such treasures, and now is such a wonderful time to be alive! In providing the following websites, I have received no benefit, and you should do your own research before buying any product.

- try Ebay (www.ebay.com.au) for a range of chipper/mulcher/shredders
- <http://news.discovery.com/earth/videos/earth-grass-is-king-on-livestock-farm.htm>
- <http://permaculturenews.org/2010/10/07/holistic-management/>

CONFESSIONS OF A WEEKEND HIPPIE

AUTUMN 2012

As the end of the journey of rebuilding approaches, Liz Ingham, of Yarraville, Victoria, can at last enjoy the fruits of much labour, and remember things past that are made new.



TWO YEARS ago we told an architect I wanted to sit at the kitchen table with the winter sun on the back of my neck. He modelled the passage of the sun and designed a room that shone in our imaginations.

A builder built the room, during eight months when we bobbed like corks in a great lake.

Trevor's sister sent four ancient pine planks by boat from Tasmania to fit some industrial table legs we found at a recycle yard in Altona. We joined the planks together and polished the top.

Now I am in that room at that table, the winter sun on the back of my neck. It is so beautiful here that for a

while we kept expecting the real owners to come home.

People used to ask me how long it would be before we could move in. I'd estimate the weeks and they'd say "you won't know yourself" or "it will all be worth it" or my personal favourite: "not long now".

I would smile at them like they were from another planet and I wanted to give a good impression.

Then I would go back to what I was doing, which if I remember correctly was strapping cardboard armour to the front of my person so I could slide on my belly in the gap beneath the floor to take photographs of the insulation falling down.



Mid-winter sun on the back of Liz's neck.



"It's like being embraced by our past." Note the green sliding doors made from old sash windows, concealed LED strip lighting and at bottom right the vent for the solar hot air system.



She wasn't kidding about the borer holes.

Now we are home, the opposite has happened. I try to remember that time and it's gone. I hate to say this, but they told me so.

In accordance with owner builder lore, it isn't finished yet, but I don't care any more because I'm no longer in the middle of that great lake: the boat is tethered to the shore.

ACCIDENTAL DESIGN COHERENCE

The place is partly beautiful by accident, because the emotional and environmental stance that dictated the design and materials also unified the look of the place. There are no new native forest hardwood or tropical timbers in our house. Nothing else was bought new if there was a used alternative.

On that basis, it was only natural that the old floor-

boards would take a holiday in Clydesdale with us for a while then come home to be re-fitted, sanded to reveal an underground railway of old borer holes (oops) and oiled.

The frame of two rooms that were pulled down at the back of the house made the same return journey. Piece by piece, the old timbers were rebuilt into bookshelves, cabinets and cupboards and even table supports — still with the wobbly lines of nail holes from the lathe and plaster. It's a bit like being embraced by our past.

Everything old and beautiful in this place is fitted to something else that took us one hundred and seventy five years to source, and it's always the bits you can't see or don't notice that cause the most trouble.

You want to re-hang a set of old concertina doors? Great idea, but you'll need some new hardware that fits the track. Found a secondhand laundry trough? That's nice, but they don't make pipe for the overflow that shape any more. Got some vintage door mechanisms and handles? Well, they look fab, but good luck finding grub screws and striker plates. Whatever they are.

NEW MATERIALS

New materials were confusing because there are so



Preposterous vintage door handles bring a smile.



Me applying hard burnishing oil to the kitchen bench tops. Damn fine exercise.

Kitchen: Ecological Panel drawers, real linoleum in a colour that "will give you a lift and it won't show the dirt", salvaged pantry doors, salvaged yellow box bench tops.

cled, non-toxic alternative to Formica or melamine. It's a bright, modern contrast to all that textured, sappy hardwood.

LINOLEUM

The old house used to have an incredibly kitschy kitchen floor of powder-blue linoleum — the proper stuff, not vinyl — painted with flowers, probably from the early 1950s. It lasted 60+ years but didn't survive being pulled up and stored in a stable, so I cut up the best bits and used it to line cupboards, where it makes people laugh.

They still make linoleum, but they call it marmoleum — it's made of FSC-certified wood dust, resin and a hessian backing. Most big carpet places can source it if you ask. The advice from my mum was to get bright red because, she said, it would give me a lift and not show the dirt. Once I had that in my head, nobody could talk me out of it! At night when the LED lights are on, it reflects a warm blush on the cabinets and the ceiling. I sliced up the leftover bits to line the kitchen drawers.

SUN LIZARD

Do you remember those Sun Lizard adverts in *Earth Garden* from a few years ago? It's a system very much like a solar hot water heater, with black panels on the roof that heat up like black things do, only instead of water inside the panels, it's air. A very small solar-electric panel runs a little pump that pulls the hot air into the

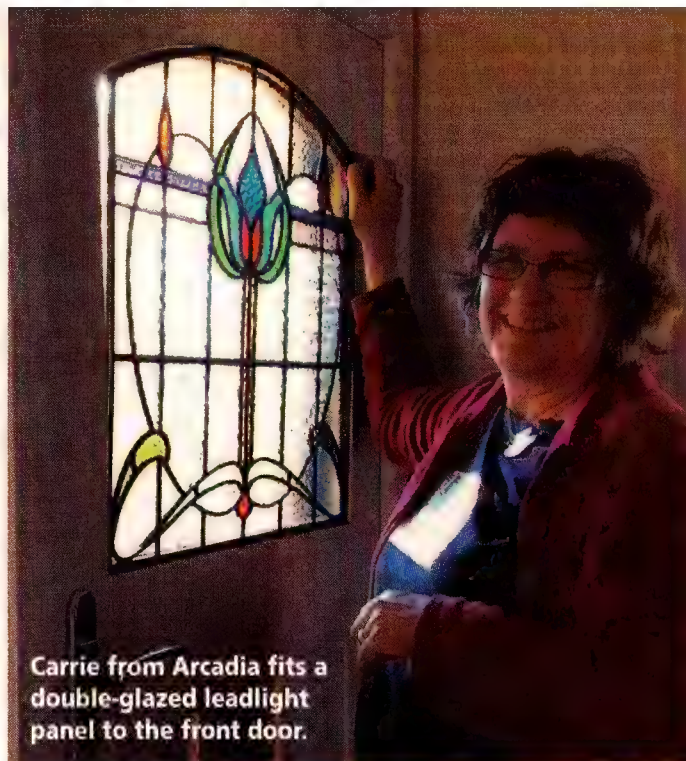
many versions of exactly the same thing to choose from and a lot of green-speak about sustainability. I heard enough of it to plug the hole in the ozone layer. Most commonly, when we described what we were after, the salesperson would start talking about a natural 'look'. We just kept calm and asked for FSC certification and an E-0 rating for formaldehyde.

Bamboo ply is very strong and stable so we used it for shelves and bench-tops, with a very pretty cut edge showing random sections of blond and brown. We are very taken with it.

The kitchen cabinets were made from Ecological Panel, which is a 100 per cent post-consumer recy-



Carpenter Dean hangs cupboard doors.



Carrie from Arcadia fits a double-glazed leadlight panel to the front door.

house, with a thermostat control.

They were sold as ventilators rather than heaters, only you are ventilating the house with fresh air that has been warmed, so you don't get that locked-in musty smell that old houses generate in winter.

I looked them up when we were designing this place, but Sun Lizard's idea was sadly ahead of its time and the company closed.

There are a few other companies marketing a similar concept. We bought a Solar Air Module (SAM) because it used air from outside instead of re-circulating, and we designed it in, so the warm air is pulled down a shaft in the wall to a vent at knee-height in the middle of the house.

The panels can cope with a bit of shading, so we put them on a roof that wasn't sunny enough for photo-



John Swift installs joinery.

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SUPPLIERS

The *Earth Garden* editorial team has asked me to list companies and products that worked well. Neither EG nor myself received any favours for these listings.

- Basset Lobaza Architects — www.bassetlobaza.com.au.
- Swift Renovations — John Swift and Dean Holmes — did the old wood, bamboo and recycled bits carpentry. Advised on everything else. Really good people — swiftrenos@optusnet.com.au.
- Brothers with a Brush — meticulous, calm painters — 0459 698 263 (Jamie).
- Ecolour: VOC-free paint — www.ecolour.com.au.
- Going Solar — we used their Bio Oil on most of the hardwood, Bio Varnish on the bamboo. Lovely people — www.goingsolar.com.au.
- OrganOil Hard Burnishing Oil — smooth natural finish for benchtops and tables — www.organoil.com.au.
- Integrity Floors: Mark Lee used Loba parquetry oil on the old Baltic pine floor. 0415 330 933.
- PlyCo. We used their 19 mm bamboo ply — www.plyco.com.au.
- Ecological Panel — <http://ecologicalpanel.com.au>.
- Memory Lane lighting. Fittings for the secondhand and homemade light shades. Lynne knows her stuff — <http://www.memlane.com.au>.
- Shiver Me Timbers: salvaged wood — www.shivermetimbers.com.au (their shop in Braybrook is close to the Ecolour shop!)
- Daylesford Bazaar: 9 Vincent St Daylesford, Vic. Ph: (03) 5348 1188 — salvaged doors, lights, handles.
- Lost Ark Restorers Barn: 294 Kororoit Creek Road, Williamstown (Altona), Vic. Ph: (03) 9397 3643 — salvaged household and old industrial pieces.
- Arcadia Leadlight: 150 Victoria Street, Seddon. www.arcadialeadlight.com.au.

voltaic panels. One thing I'll say against it is that the fan is loud. We insulated it as well as we could, but the noise comes out of the air vent!

On those sunny mid-winter mornings in Melbourne when you can see the sun rather than feel it, the SAM switches itself on around 8.15 am and becomes properly warm an hour later. I'm sure the fresh warm air

has contributed to my unnaturally good health this winter. I wish you good health, too.

• *Next time: landscaping, decking, 'a nice pear' and annoying the permaculture experts by finding a design purpose for roses.*

BOUNTY BOAST

Let's see your garden produce! We want to ooh and aah, and have (slight) pangs of envy as we help you celebrate what's great, and what you ate, from your garden.

PRODIGIOUS PRODUCE AT PAKENHAM

BY RAFFAELINA AND MICHAEL SCUGLIA

Pakenham, Victoria.

We live on two and half acres of land in Pakenham, Victoria. We have a large organic garden and we grow our own fruit and vegies. It is so wonderful to go in the garden just before cooking and picking a basket of fresh vegies and herbs.

We do a lot of preserving. We also grow a lot of fruit. What we can't use we give to family and friends. We also have free-range chickens.

It is a lot of hard work but well worth it.

This year has been amazing with the heat and the rain. We had an abundance of fruit and vegies.



The family and friends of Raffaolina and Michael are fortunate people.

SHARE THE HARVEST

Want to show off your bumper crop of delicious homegrown produce? Send in a photo of yourself, (or a family member or friend) proudly posing with your harvest with a snappy caption describing it all. If we publish your photo you'll receive a free one-year *Earth Garden AND Back Yard Farmer* subscription. Email your photo to Fiona — editorial@earthgarden.com.au — with 'Bounty Boast' in the subject line. Happy harvesting!

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VIVE LA RÉVOLUTION!

It's little wonder the Normans won the Battle of Hastings in 1066 if they ate as well as their modern-day compatriots. Madeleine Delaney, of West Hobart, Tasmania, explores an organic family farm and restaurant from the inside.



IF THERE WAS a revolution in France today, I would support it. I would let the revolutionaries stay here," pledged Philippe Enee over *petit déjeuner* one morning. Perhaps he doesn't realise that is precisely what he is already doing. Philippe and his wife Eku Honda are quietly hosting their own rebellion, a real Food Fight against the industrial, the unnatural, the pesticides, the processed, the mass-produced and the unsustainable. Their weapons: garden spades and watering cans, whisks and patisserie blades wielded with finesse and passion. I joined them recently, a wwoofer (Willing Workers on Organic Farms) in arms. Revolution after breakfast? But of course.

Saint-lô, Normandy, is a truly beautiful part of the world. Lush and fertile, it is known for dairy farms (this is the home of Camembert) and apple orchards where *pommeau*, *cidre* and *calvados* (apple brandy) are squeezed and fermented. With incredible produce, rolling green hills and changeable weather, it reminded me a lot of Tasmania — perhaps that's why I loved it so. The 32-hectare family

farm, *La Barberie*, lies 30 minutes from town. Run by Philippe's father before him, it is now divided between him, his mother Mamy, and his brother, Serge.

Mamy, a part of the cause without meaning to be, I suspect, is a petite Frenchwoman steadfastly carrying on the traditions of times past when people plucked their own chickens for the Saturday lunch. She'll also show you the wooden dining table, around which said lunch occurs, that still bears the scars of German knives where soldiers cut their breakfast sausages during WW2. The whole area was practically flattened during the war, and the farm is just 30 minutes from the Normandy D-Day beaches.

Brother Serge grows wheat on site to mill for his organic sourdough. This interesting character was an enigma, but Philippe told me he was essentially the founder of the organic movement in Normandy — now a rolling boulder of an idea — and that he certified as organic more than 25 years ago. The respect with which his chosen task is undertaken goes to near reverential level, and the rhythmic pushing and pulling of dough and loaves



Norman seafood is incredible. We ate these crabs with homemade mayonnaise and freshly picked salads from the garden.



Martin helping to plough the field for next season's potatoes one wet morning.

in and out of cavernous wood burning ovens in the dim light has a very monastic quality to it.

After 20 years travelling through Australia, Africa and Japan, Philippe, a trained chef, boomeranged home to *La Barberie* and established *L'Auberge Paysanne* (The Rustic Inn) and the working farm that supports it. He and Eku work incredibly hard to feed the hordes arriving to dine at their restaurant, as well as catering for festivals and private events, with their homegrown organic goodness.

The greenhouse grows many of the salad leaves, greens, herbs and some root vegetables for the restaurant and catering. (The broad beans were flowering in here just as I left and Dave Pollard, resident wwoofer from Birmingham, garden design specialist, flower fancier and general garden know-it-all, harvested the top 10 cm of these for an incredible springtime treat, blanched then fried with olive oil, soy sauce and lemon juice.)

Most of the meat eaten at *La Barberie* comes from the assortment of around 10 Iberian and Yorkshire (or Old White) free-ranging swineys.

With their mix of headstrong obstinacy and gentle



Eku's freshly baked sourdough bread.



Mari Kobayashi, a Japanese guest staying at La Barberie, plants corn in Les Palace a Salad.



The intrepid wwoofing recruits! Clockwise from top left: yours truly, Nadia Veer, David Pollard, Yanni Marcoux, Martin Preuss and Lou Balcombe.

skill, Philippe and Eku are a force to be reckoned with in today's fight for better food. As farmers and chefs, the pair have a particular affinity with what they grow, creating a happy harmony between garden and kitchen.

"I don't care about the taste," Philippe stated bluntly to me one day. Wait. Stop. Did a French chef just tell me that? This announcement, shocking at first, does make sense when merged with Philippe's steadfast ethics. What is key to his and Eku's food is integrity of origin, that whatever ingredients they use must be homegrown, local or organic.

It should be noted that contrary to the aforementioned statement, all food eaten at *La Barberie* is truly spectacular. "*C'est délicieux*" was an essential French phrase to learn for immediate use at any repast. The freshest Norman seafood, free-range organic meat, salads galore, home-fermented miso soup — no two banquets were the same. Each meal bar break-

fast was accompanied by Philippe's home-brewed true Normandie *cidre* and rounded off nicely by some of Eku's sugary magic — *tarte à la rhubarbe*, *crème caramel*, *gateaux*, *financiers*, *macarons* and on and on it went. Needless to say, my stomach was also rounded off nicely after five weeks of this.

Every aspect of the farm sings for the sustainability revolution, whether it is eco-friendly strawbale and mudbrick buildings, solar and wind power, or the horse-drawn plough sowing next season's potatoes, or the idea that no food really gets wasted — leftovers are transformed into another scrumptious meal or else nosh for the pigs or compost worms.

Passing on their ideas and teachings is especially important at *La Barberie* and the farm gate is wide open to guests to visit, stay, eat, work, observe and learn their way of life. Workshops for paying guests are individually tailored and include seasonal cooking, gardening, composting, wild foraging, baking, butchery and green building. Alternatively, as a wwoof, one comes to experience and become a part of life at *La Barberie*, learning through osmosis. The farm is so well equipped for visitors that many times there were more than 15 of us around the dinner table: a regular little food army, we were! Carrying the ideas of a food revolution in the soles of our gumboots and swallowing those sustainable values with our lunches. *C'est délicieux!*



Martin bottles the raw Normandy milk delivered fresh from a nearby farm — ready for *Teurgoule*!



Around the long table for lunch at *La Barberie*, Philippe and Eku in front.

SOUPE D'ORTIES (NETTLE SOUP)

This recipe epitomised *La Barberie* for me: something so delicious made from something seasonally wild and nutritious. This soup is a springtime treat as the plant is in its optimal nutrient-giving mood. Pick only the top four leaves or so before the plant goes to seed. And need I say it? Wear gloves.

- good splash of olive oil
- 2 onions, diced
- 4 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 2 turnips, chopped
- 3–4 carrots
- 1 celery, chopped
- 1 bouquet garni (parsley, thyme, bay leaf, marjoram)
- 100 g rice
- 100 g red lentils
- 500 g nettles, washed
- salt & pepper

In a (very) large pot add the olive oil and fry the onions and garlic till soft. Add 4 litres of water, then carrots, celery, turnips and bouquet garni.

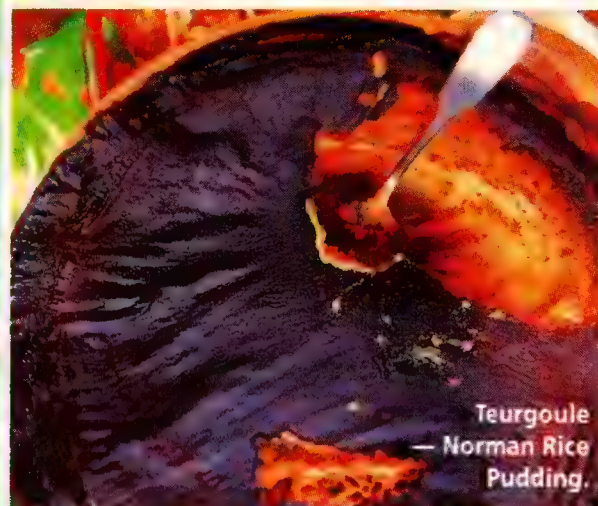
Pour in the rice halfway through the cooking time, and the red lentils towards the end. Add the nettles only when the broth has finished cooking and the heat is turned off. Stir these through, season with salt and pepper and remove the bouquet garni to blend with a stick blender (or a stand blender once it has cooled).



Bérénice Basley picking spring nettle shoots for *Soupe d'Ortie* — nettle soup.



David Pollard,
flower fancier
and gardener
extraordinaire.



Teurgoule
— Norman Rice
Pudding.

TEURGOULE (NORMAN RICE PUDDING)

Want to know the secret to the best rice pudding in the world? Seven hours cooking time. But do not fear! Six hours and 45 minutes of that time you are asleep. For her Teurgoule Eku used fresh, unpasteurised (raw) milk — a Normandy specialty — and also left it free from flavourings. If you like though, put in a vanilla pod, cinnamon, nutmeg, lemon or orange zest.

2 litres unhomogenised (or raw, if you can get it) milk

200 g round (such as Arborio) rice

200 g organic cane sugar

pinch fleur de sel (sea salt)

In a large, thick, glazed earthenware bowl add the rice, sugar and salt.

Heat the milk in a large pot to just before boiling. Then, simply pour this into the bowl and bake this for 7 hours or so at a very low temperature — around 100°C – 120°C. Eku simply placed hers in Serge's wood oven after he had finished baking bread at 11 pm and left them there to cook and caramelise overnight.



The old farmhouse buildings
on *La Barberie* survived the
war to live through Phillippe
and Eku's revolution!

WHAT'S YOUR PROBLEM?

BOB RICH ANSWERS QUESTIONS ABOUT
OWNER BUILDING

Email Bob at bob@bobswriting.com, or write to him at PO Box 7, Healesville, Vic. 3777, with a stamped return envelope. If you don't want your correspondence printed send \$20 with the question. You might like to visit him at www.mudsmith.net.



CLADDING OVER FIBRO

Hello Bob,

After you advised someone on covering a weatherboard house with strawbales, I wondered if you could help me with info on cladding a fibro house for insulation and looks. I don't have enough room to cover it with straw bales. Do you know if you can 'bag' (or otherwise render) a fibro house? And would it be insulating? Thank you.

Best wishes

Ms Jo Bovingdon

Hi Jo,

After my article on strawbale rendering was published, I was contacted by a long-term strawbale builder who corrected me. The method I described could lead to rotting within the wall, and be a disaster in the event of a house fire. So, the next issue of *Earth Garden* contained a retraction (EG159, pp 58–59, retraction EG160, p 73).

I've been thinking further about it though. If you removed the inside wall lining as well as the outside, you could have bales inserted into the gaps between the studs (perhaps with a few studs removed), and then rendered both inside and outside. That would avoid the dangers, and in effect would be replacing the weatherboard (or fibro) wall with a strawbale one. That would have exactly the same characteristics as any other strawbale wall.

So, the extra space needed would be about 12 cm less than the thickness of a strawbale with rendering on each side. I don't know if that would make this solution possible for you.

I have seen old fibro houses with a mud render on the outside. The one that had lasted well was over chicken wire. Crown seal bottle tops were used as spacers between the chicken mesh and the wall (each nail holding the wire went through a bottle top), then the mud was thrown on and firmly trowelled in. However, even this wall needed some patching of cracks after a couple of years.

'Bagging' implies a thinner layer of render, which is



A fibro palace awaiting a green conversion.

likely to crack up and peel off.

A layer of mud, even a couple of inches thick, doesn't provide any thermal insulation to speak of. Assuming there is insulation in the wall, it won't provide any thermal mass for storage. So, if you do it, you'll get a changed appearance, but the house won't work any differently.

If there is no insulation in the wall, the most effective thing to do would be to retrofit with pumped-in foam insulation. This is commercially available, and an internet search may find a supplier in your area.

When the foam is being pumped in, there is a terrible smell that I suspect is harmful to health, and some people are highly sensitive even to the smallest leftover



Some people are highly sensitive to pumped-in foam insulation. Check that no occupants of your house are going to be affected, and perhaps leave the house empty for a few days. The foam becomes inert after it has set.

traces. If you decide on this option, it would be best to check that no occupants of your house are going to be affected, and perhaps to leave the house empty for a few days, even if the contractor pumps the stuff in from the

outside. The foam becomes inert after it has set.

I hope this is helpful to you. Do let *Earth Garden* know how you went with improving your house. Bob.

BUILD YOUR BACKYARD CLAY OVEN

by Gavin Webber

Reviewed by Bob Rich (<http://mudsmith.net>)

This delightful little e-book is a good recipe for two kinds of fun: building a dome oven, and cooking in it. As you read, you can hear Gavin chatting to you about it, explaining things in simple, no nonsense terms.

The illustrative photographs make the book easy to use.

The step-by-step instructions are meticulously thought out and clearly presented. I wish I had instructions this detailed for building my first house!

His choice of materials and techniques were environmentally sound. For example, he used clay dug out from his own soil (during the construction of Cluckingham Palace, the place for the chooks), and

when he could, he got free or secondhand bricks and things. This is a good example to follow.

I approve of a life-style of doing things for yourself, living a varied, full life instead of the one-dimensional existence most people unthinkingly follow. Although building an oven in your back yard may superficially seem like a luxury, it is not. It is part of returning to the meaningful, enjoyable way of doing things humans evolved to do.

For more from Gavin and to purchase the book, go to www.greeningofgavin.com.



QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

WITH JACKIE FRENCH

If you need a recipe for brown rot cures or brawn, or want to know how to preserve a pig's bladder or repel a brown snake, email Jackie at jfrench@dragnet.com.au.

Note: All Q and A may be published in *Earth Garden*.

THE BUNYA EXCHANGE

Dear Editor,

In the Autumn edition of *Earth Garden* (EG163, March 2013) the matter of the range and reproductive capacity of the Bunya Pine was raised.

I live in the Tamar Valley in Tasmania where the Bunya Pine grows, and fruits, and I attach a photo of the trunk with young pines emerging.

There is a stand of Bunya Pines at the Launceston Church Grammar School, which has to be fenced off

from time to time to stop the huge cones falling and causing injury. Recently I noted several large specimens in Fitzroy Gardens, Melbourne with aged seeds in the floor litter.

So they will grow in the far south, including Tasmania, and reproduce. The tree in the photo has no other Bunya Pine within 15 kilometres, to my knowledge.

Cheers,

John S.



This Bunya Pine is thriving in the Tamar Valley, Tasmania.



Don't panic if your vanilla pods have no scent at all — they may just need to be dried.

Hi John,

Fascinating. Have assumed that they need moisture when young more than warmth. The ones in the park at Goulburn, NSW, and Lanyon, ACT, as well as at our place probably survive lower temperatures than Hobart. Do you know if they might have grown in Tasmania before white settlement? Am fairly sure from my grandmother and great uncle's memories of local Bunya nut harvests that there were mature trees here when the first white settlers arrived. The ones in this area don't seem to fruit every year, or even regularly. I suspect they may need two or three wet summers before a good crop. The trees on the outskirts of Brisbane when I was a child bore more regularly, though maybe that was just a coincidence of wet years too.

All the very best,
Jackie French.

Thanks Jackie,

I would be confident these were introduced many years ago.

I know the Bunya Mountains quite well and have

spent winter mornings at -5°C there.

Cheers,
John.

Hi,

Thanks for that. The Goulburn one has survived at least -10°C . Goulburn has possibly the worst climate in Australia: either hot, dry, gale-force winds or cold, dry, gale-force winds, interspersed with the odd flood. Am interested though if there is any chance Bunyas may have grown pre-white settlement in Tasmania?

VEXING VANILLA

Dear Jackie,

Have you ever tried growing a vanilla vine? Do you think it would grow here in Melbourne?

Regards,
Alan.

Hi Alan,

Yes and no respectively: have tried to grow vanilla several times, keeping it in the sunny corner of the living room



Vanilla pods take about ten months to ripen.



If you find your vanilla already smells stunning, put it to good use.

where the curry tree and coffee bush flourish through winter, but each time it has karked it towards the end of winter — just not enough heat, I think. We wear jumpers in the house in winter, so if you keep your house hotter than ours, yours might make it. You'll also need a two-metre stake for it to clamber up. Vanilla will grow to about ten metres or even more, though this is unlikely unless you have it in a massive pot. Keep your vanilla orchid moist — vanilla shrivels in dry weather — and mulch well and wait three years.

In the third autumn, prune the tip of the vine to encourage flowering — then watch carefully in spring, as each vanilla flower will only last a day and you have to be quick to pollinate them.

Each flower has two little lips inside, covering the pollen and the female part of the flower — the stigma. Use a toothpick or a kid's tiny paintbrush

to move the sticky pollen to the sticky stigma. The vanilla pods take about ten months to ripen. Once the pods change from green to yellow to brown they are ripe. Usually they smell delicious by now, but don't panic if they have no scent at all — they just need to be dried. (Most commercial beans are picked when they are still green and mechanically dried and sweated till they are fragrant.) Bundle the pods together so they stay moist and sweaty and keep in a hot place for about two weeks, then separate them and dry them in a hot place out of direct sunlight. However, if you find your vanilla already smells stunning, don't bother with the drying stage — the pods will have dried sufficiently.

Alternatively, move to northern Australia ...

All the best,
Jackie.

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Not able to leave chooks unattended for the weekend.

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ALL FIRED UP

WOOD-FIRED OVENS Q & A

Over the past eight years Alan Watt has conducted wood-fired oven workshops throughout Australia and, more recently, overseas. Here Alan, from Tanja, New South Wales, describes some of the fascinating clay oven history he's uncovered while on some of his workshop tours of North America.



CLAY-BASED OVENS OF NORTH AMERICA

The use of clay material for the building of wood-fired ovens has a history almost as old as baking itself, and we know from pictograms that it was the common material used for oven construction in the early civilisations of Mesopotamia, Egypt and Greece.

The fact that clay is still used for oven construction today, in many parts of the world, attests to its suitability for such use, as well as being readily available and inexpensive.

The secret in using a clay-based material for oven construction is to find, or compose, a suitable mix that is not too plastic (to avoid excessive shrinkage on drying, thus creating cracks) yet has enough clay material to bind the sand, soil and other non-plastic ingredients to be workable and strong enough to hold a shape.

While I was researching ovens built from earth materials for my book *Build Your Own Wood Fired Oven* I discovered two distinct clay-based ovens still being produced today, although they are gradually declining as access to modern gas and electric ovens become more accessible and affordable.



A clay bread oven in rural Quebec, 1906.
Courtesy Canadian Museum of Civilizations.



A contemporary Quebec oven with typical timber cover to protect the oven from the weather.



The central fire, after burning for a few hours, was then spread across the whole floor and thin branches of cottonwood were thrown in, causing an inferno within the oven with flames shooting out the doorway.

This Pueblo Indian clay brick-based bread oven is in New Mexico, USA. After initial slow heating an inferno is created with thin cottonwood sticks.

One of these ovens is produced in the St Lawrence River area of Quebec, Canada.

The history of these ovens goes back to the arrival of the French settlers in Quebec from the early 1600s and would have been based on the rural ovens of France of the time.

In 1979 Lisa Boily and Jean Francois Blanchette published a book entitled *Bread Ovens of Quebec*. It recorded their research into these distinct ovens and was a major source for my book.

The distinctive style of these Quebec ovens is their half-avocado shape generally built over a basket-like framework of hazel or alder branches with a fine silt and clay material used for both oven floor and dome.

The other unique clay oven construction is that of the Pueblo Indians of the south-west United States of America, in the 'four corner states' — New Mexico,

Arizona, Utah and Colorado.

The development of these ovens occurred after the introduction of similar ovens following the Spanish invasion and spread throughout the south-west region largely through missions.

The smaller ovens are generally built up by hand, similar to cob construction, using large lumps of clay creating domes 100 mm to 150 mm thick. The larger ovens are often constructed initially from unfired clay bricks and then smoothed inside and out with a similar material. A number of newer ovens are constructed with a fired brick floor replacing the more fragile clay floor.

Neither the Quebec ovens nor the Pueblo ovens have chimneys as they were principally for baking breads and did not require attendance at the oven other than placing the dough in the hot oven and retrieving the bread when cooked.



The oven is loaded with 70 loaves weighing approximately a half-kilo each.

During a visit to North America last year conducting wood-fired oven workshops in Canada and USA, I took the opportunity to visit both Quebec and south-west USA to see first hand these unique ovens.

For the Canadian ovens I chose to centre my visit around the town of Baie-St-Paul on the St Lawrence River, Quebec, on the basis that the map in *Bread Ovens of Quebec* showed a greater concentration of ovens in that area.

It would appear that the 40-odd years that have passed since the book's publication have taken a toll on the number of ovens remaining, and it was mostly at tourist venues that I found these ovens still being used for historic associations. I was, however, fortunately able to talk to one of the oven builders who gave me greater insight into the materials and construction techniques used in the creation of these ovens.

Prior to visiting the south-west USA for the first

time I was told there were plenty of Pueblo ovens still being used and I was also aware, through research, that it was not so easy to visit most Pueblos as they were, understandably, private housing areas and the residents did not want to be subject to gawking tourist visitors.

I decided to begin by visiting the Centre for Pueblo Culture, in Albuquerque, New Mexico, in the hope of some guidance as to where to see some ovens. And besides, their website and tourist brochures had a photo of a typical Pueblo oven in the courtyard of the grounds. That at least would be something to study and measure.

On entering the centre my first question was "Where is the adobe oven?" I learned it had recently been demolished, but that I could visit the new one in the restaurant grounds.

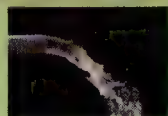
I could see the familiar earth-coloured dome in the distance and headed straight there with measuring tape in hand, only to find it was a concrete-covered oven

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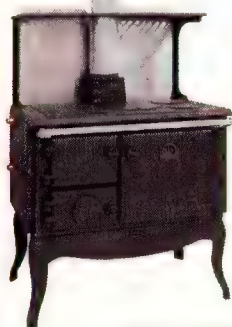
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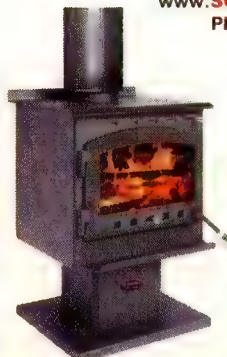
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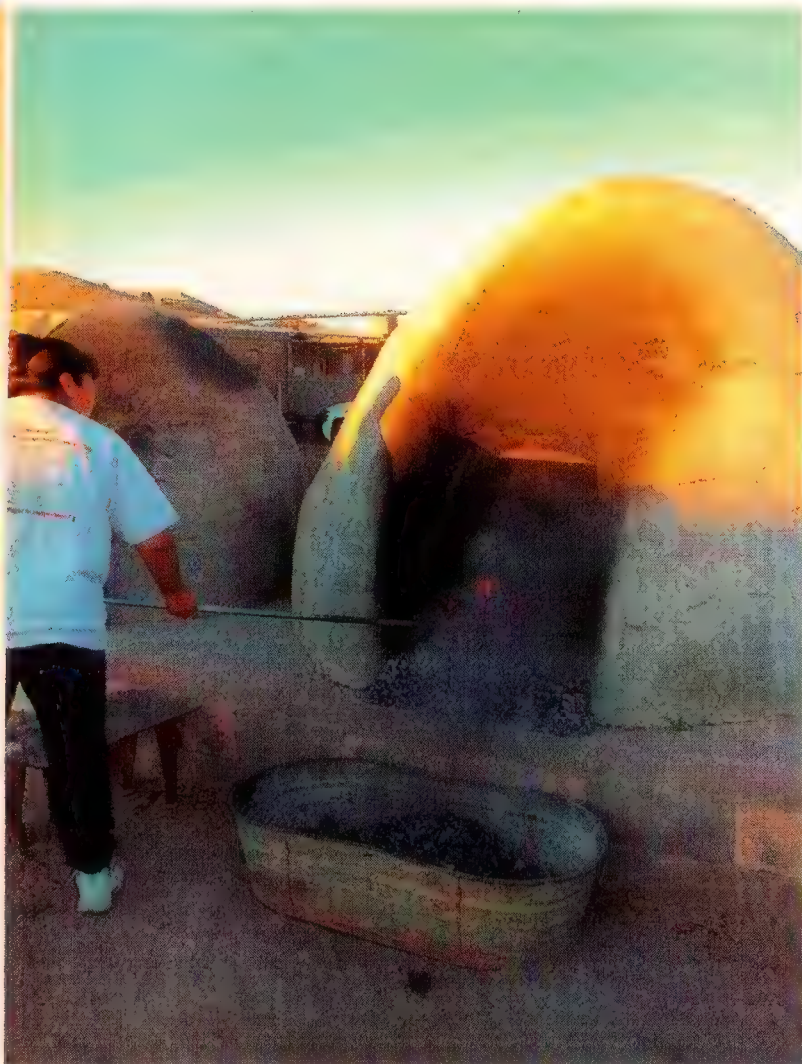
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After the fire has burnt down the coals and ash are scraped from the oven and the floor wiped clean with a damp hessian mop.

dome and inside (I kid you not) a commercial, gas-fired pizza oven! Really!

With little help from the non-Pueblo Indian research staff in my quest to see a real Pueblo oven, I left, dejected, to drive to Santa Fe where I knew there was at least a rich art gallery scene.

On my way I called in at a roadside diner for lunch, and when the waitress heard my Aussie accent she asked "What are you doing in the area?" I told her of my search for the Pueblo ovens and my disappointment to date. Would you believe it, she not only came from the local



After about an hour the baking was finished.

Pueblo but had also helped her grandmother to build an oven and fire it?

This resulted in the waitress telephoning her grandmother, an introduction into the Pueblo and subsequently an arrangement to see a large oven being fired by another family.

They asked me to return to the Pueblo the following day at 6 am, where a moderate fire had already been going for a couple of hours burning local juniper.

The grandmother and daughter had previously prepared 100 lbs (about 45 kg) of bread dough and had

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- Broulee, NSW – 21/22 Sept.
- Bendigo, VIC – 5/6 Oct.

- Sedgwick, VIC – 12/13 Oct.
- Lawson, NSW – 16/17 Nov.
- NSW – 23/24 Nov.
- Bungendore, NSW – 7/8 Dec.

produced 70 loaves in shallow pans, which had risen to a generous plump shape ready for the oven.

The oven was approximately 2.4 metres in diameter at the floor level and was about 2 metres tall, built of unfired clay bricks and rendered smooth on the outside. It had been built with a brick floor for more permanence.

The central fire, after burning for a few hours, was then spread across the whole floor and thin branches of cottonwood were thrown in, causing an inferno within the oven with flames shooting out the doorway.

This was allowed to burn to coals and when most of the glow had disappeared the ash was scraped out, the floor swept clean with a hessian mop and the bread inserted with a long wooden peel till the whole floor was covered.

The door opening was then closed using a damp blanket over plywood sheets and I was invited to join the family for breakfast while the bread baked.

There was no temperature measurement and the family seemed to know, from long experience, that it was the correct heat and did not go to any length to feel inside the oven to gauge the temperature.

After about an hour it was deemed the baking was finished (no peeking in during the process) and once the blanket/plywood door was removed it revealed 70 perfectly baked bread loaves, remarkably even through-

out the oven.

The loaves were then removed to the house where they were removed from their pans and placed on elevated timbers to cool ready to be transported 200 km the next day to an Indian Navaho reserve where they were to be sold. For such a big effort there seemed little monetary return, when travel time and fuel costs are considered, but this was one method the family had in being financially independent.

I am indebted to the Pueblo family for their generosity and hospitality in allowing me to see their skills in using such a basic clay oven to produce bread to such perfection.

Build Your Own Wood Fired Oven by Alan Watt is available from The Good Life Book Club for \$24.95 plus postage. Phone (03) 5424 1814 or go to www.goodlifebookclub.com and order online. **Back Yard Ovens Volumes One and Two** are also available for \$19.95 each plus postage.



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EGFA's projects keep rolling along. Our 18th project, at Kaku village - five hours walk from the nearest hospital - was completed on 3 June with 25 LED lights installed in the



health post. For more pix see our webpage. EGFA's 19th, 20th, 21st, 22nd and 23rd projects have now all been approved by the EGFA Board of Directors and will begin in the next few months as the monsoon season passes and transport in Nepal becomes easier. Join EGFA today: every cent of your membership money goes to direct project support via groups like our project partner, the Himalayan Light Foundation (www.hlf.org.np).



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WASABI: INTENSE, VIVID AND EXPENSIVE

If you need your sinuses cleaned out, this might just do the trick. *Earth Garden* co-founder Keith Smith, of Artarmon, NSW, examines a pungent Japanese condiment.



FIERY hot and vivid green — wasabi paste or powder is familiar to all of us who enjoy eating sashimi (raw fish) or sushi in Japanese restaurants. It certainly opens the sinuses! While this concoction might contain a small amount of real wasabi, it is usually a mixture of horseradish, Chinese mustard and food colouring.

Wasabi (*Wasabia japonica*; *W. tenuis*), sometimes called Japanese horseradish, is a perennial semi-aquatic plant native to Japan, where it has been cultivated since about the tenth century. Famous Japanese woodblock artists like Utagawa Hiroshige and Kawabata Gyokusho depicted the plant floating among fish.

The wild plant, known as swamp wasabi (*sawa*), grows on the moist banks of shaded cool water mountain valley streams, while domesticated wasabi (*oka*), is raised in flooded fields. It is related to mustard, cabbage, horseradish and watercress.

Even in Japan fresh wasabi is an expensive delicacy in short supply. The best quality wasabi, intensely hot, though sweet, is made by freshly grating the short, thick, knobbly rhizomes or root-like stems (but not the root itself), traditionally with a sharkskin grater. Prepare wasabi stems by peeling the skin under running water and then grate the stem in a circular motion from the thick end. Make small balls of wasabi and leave for 10 minutes. Wasabi quickly loses flavour and potency, so it's best to prepare just a small amount before eating.

Traditionally, wasabi is served with soy sauce

to accompany sushi, sashimi and soba noodles. As a condiment or garnish, grated wasabi mixed with melted butter adds a sharp edge to steak or lamb chops. Serve wasabi sparingly with oysters, salmon, tuna, pickled ginger or grilled Camembert cheese. It is even used to make wasabi ice cream and croquettes.

Fresh wasabi leaves, stalks and tiny white flowers have a milder flavour than the stem and add a sharp crunchy texture to salads. The beautiful green, glossy, heart-shaped leaves grow to 50 to 80 centimetres in diameter but are usually picked when about 20 to 40 centimetres. Plants reach about 15 centimetres in height at maturity.

Wasabi roots, leaves and stems can be dried or pickled in sake or soy sauce. Dried leaves have been used to flavour cheese.

Wasabi is also popular in China and Korea. Since 1990 it has been grown commercially in New Zealand and more recently in Tasmania, in running water in gravel beds, using hydroponic methods that suit this water-loving plant. High quality stalks have been known to sell for more than \$100 per kg. There is good

potential to combine wasabi growing with aquaculture or aquaponics, using water from fish farms and hatcheries.

Stems wrapped in a moist cloth or in a water container can be stored for two weeks or longer in the refrigerator.

The wild plant, known as swamp wasabi (sawa), grows on the moist banks of shaded cool water mountain valley streams, while domesticated wasabi (oka), is raised in flooded fields.



To make wasabi, grate the short, thick, knobby rhizomes or root-like stems, traditionally with a sharkskin grater.

WHERE TO BUY WASABI PLANTS

- Four Seasons Herbs, PO Box 4158, Coffs Harbour Jetty, NSW, 2450. Web: www.fourseasonsherbs.com.au. They sell the 'Daruma' variety, good in warmer climates at \$25.00 per plant.
- The Diggers Club, PO Box 300, Dromana, Victoria, 3936. Web: www.diggers.com.au. They offer 'Daruma' at \$24.95 per plant and \$15.99 per plant for members.



Serve wasabi sparingly with oysters, salmon, tuna, pickled ginger or grilled Camembert cheese. Or make wasabi ice cream.



Wasabi farm in Japan. Wasabi will grow in ceramic pots immersed in damp soil or running water, shaded from the sun in summer or in controlled greenhouse conditions.

GROWING

If you live near a mountain valley stream in a cool area with temperatures ranging from 12°C to 24°C, or in a similar cool, damp climate, you have the ideal conditions for growing your own wasabi.

Yes, cultivating wasabi is a real challenge and raising plants from seed is tricky. Seeds are difficult to obtain and might cost as much as \$1.00 each. Japanese farmers prefer to propagate plants in running water from stem cuttings or offshoots, anchoring the growing stem with stones.

Some gardeners are growing wasabi successfully from plants delivered by mail from one Australia supplier, which offers wasabi plants at \$25 each or five for \$105. (See box for more information.)

Wasabi will grow in ceramic pots immersed in damp soil or running water, shaded from the sun in summer (rig up a cover supported by bamboo stakes), or in controlled greenhouse conditions. Stems are damaged and discolour at temperatures above 30°C.

Wasabi grows slowly. You can begin to harvest stems in the second or third year when they are 15 centimetres long and weigh about 100 grams.

VARIETIES

Wasabi cultivars are named for the regions where they have been traditionally farmed in Japan. 'Daruma', which has a single stem, or at least fewer offshoots than others, is the most widely grown. 'Mazuma' has a hotter taste.



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Beck Lowe

COOK IT



'Beer ice cream? Who knew! The sweet chocolate and coffee flavours of milk stout pair so easily with desserts.'

Madeleine Delany

KEEP IT



'I was standing in my chook pen on our suburban block in Alice Springs the other day and suddenly realized how, over time, our chook yard has become a very multi functional area.'

Bron Grieve

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Ian Thomas



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BATTERY STORAGE ON HORIZON FOR SOLAR ROOFTOPS

The world's biggest supplier of solar inverters, SMA Solar Technology, has announced that it will be mass marketing its award-winning household solar battery system in the fourth quarter of 2013. German-based SMA's Sunny Boy Smart Energy technology – which won best product in the "Photovoltaics" category of the Intersolar AWARD in Munich this year – is the first wall-mounted, mass-produced PV inverter with an integrated battery that can increase the self-consumption of solar power in households by up to 50 per cent.

The energy stored in the Sunny Boy's integrated lithium-ion battery of about 2kWh is sufficient to supply a four-person household with about three hours of electric current in the evening, says SMA. The battery is also easy to install, and designed with a service life of 10 years and a depth of discharge of 90 per cent – thus cutting both upfront and overall costs.

SMA says the storage system also has advantages for the electricity grid, reducing the amount of electricity it must export, and evening out the fluctuations of solar PV power generation. "This not only makes the use of batteries even more efficient and gives the system operator more independence from rising electricity prices but also enables integration into future Smart Grid business models," the company says.

The news of the solar storage breakthrough has been welcomed in Australia, where the number of households with rooftop solar installed recently passed the one-million mark, and is predicted to continue its steep climb.

"Prior to SMA's announcement, households have been restricted to

smaller solar systems as presently there is only an incentive to produce power at exactly the same time that it is being used," said Matthew Wright, executive director of Climate Solution think-tank Zero Emissions.

"This means families who are away during the day can only economically install a smaller 1.5-3kW solar system . . . with a 1.5-3kW solar system Australian families can eliminate about 30 per cent of their power consumption using a standard north facing installation," Wright said.

"If we add batteries, households could reduce their annual electricity purchasing by 75 to 100 per cent, depending on their available roof space and whether they are in a south location like Melbourne or a more sunny northern location like Brisbane." Wright says the storage systems could also save on costly grid upgrades, which are subsidised by ordinary householders through ever-rising power bills.

"We've been investing way too much in the grid when evening peaks can be met more cheaply with solar and batteries," said Wright. "These grid upgrades are costly and are hidden away in our electricity bills and an average consumer would be paying more than \$1000 a year for a grid that is unnecessarily oversized and costly. There is an opportunity now for the government to offer an incentive program for solar grid battery systems," he said.

"To make this happen, we need to kickstart the industry and with Germany's SMA, one of the major suppliers now gearing up to offer a solution, now is the time for the Australian Labor government to make an announcement and follow through immediately with action on the ground."



SMA has an unrivalled reputation for inverter reliability.

Meanwhile, BYD, the Chinese electric car manufacturer backed by US investor Warren Buffett, is also entering the energy storage market in Australia, saying there is large potential for the technology in Australian homes. BYD has signed a distribution agreement with Australian company Fe Batteries for its home energy storage system called the DESS, as well as for its solar PV, LED lighting and solar street lamp products.

The energy storage market is being described as the "next big thing" in Australia, with installers and solar companies across the country reporting massive increase in inquiries. BYD said the recent decrease of the various feed in tariffs across Australia, and continuing rises in electricity prices meant Australian householders installing solar pv on their homes or business were looking to use storage systems. This enabled them to store the solar energy generated from their roof for later re-use rather than purchasing electricity from the grid or to export their excess energy to their local grid and benefit from their local FIT.

The DESS system – which comes in a 3kW/8kWh single-phase system and 9kW/8kWh three-phase system

– allows existing or newly installed solar PV systems with battery storage seamlessly through an inverter and battery storage module to their local grid. There is also an off-grid home energy system. Ian Goldfinch, business director of Fe Batteries, said Australians had access to abundant sunshine, are environmentally aware, and interested in practical ways to save money on their electricity bills.

“What has been needed is technology to support home and business energy storage systems,” he said. BYD manufactures electric vehicles and electric buses in China and is ranked as the fastest growing Chinese automotive and green energy technology company.

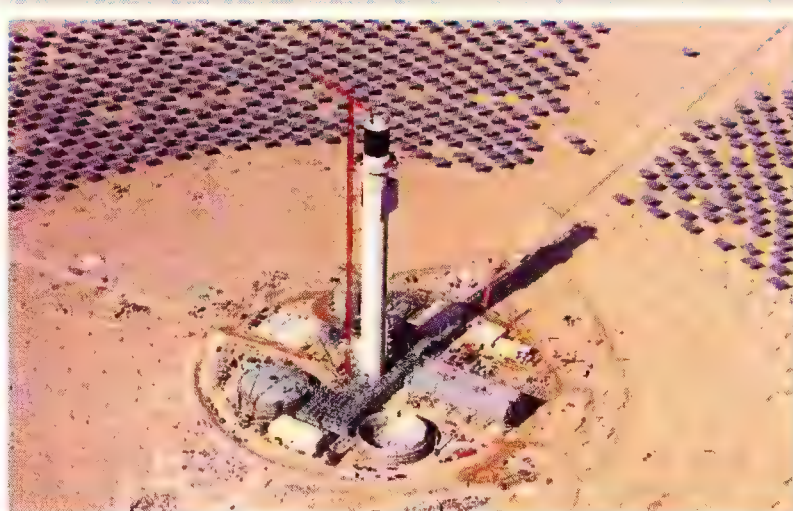
NEW BASELOAD SOLAR CHALLENGES COAL & GAS

The 110MW Crescent Dunes Solar Energy Plant, a concentrated solar power project due to be completed in Nevada in the USA early next year, will not just be the largest solar power tower plant with fully integrated energy storage built – it could also challenge the way the world thinks about renewable energy. Or even energy sources in general.

The \$1 billion Crescent Dunes project near Tonopah in the Central Nevada Desert, some 300 km north of Las Vegas, was developed by the Santa Monica-based SolarReserve and features the company's market leading molten salt power tower technology with fully integrated energy storage.

What makes it unique and a potential game changer in the electricity industry is the flexibility and dispatchability of its power, meaning that it can deliver electricity whenever it is needed by customers; and its cost, which already beats diesel, is competitive with new build coal and gas generation.

The Crescent Dunes facility will have ten hours of molten salt storage, which on average will allow it to deliver 110MW of baseload capacity to Las Vegas between the hours of 12 noon and midnight each day, when the city needs it most to power the lights and air conditioning of its casinos and entertainment palaces. It has signed a 25-year power contract with NV Energy, Nevada's largest utility, to do that.



A recent aerial photo of the construction site of the Crescent Dunes solar thermal power plant in the Nevada desert.

Tom Georgis, SolarReserve's senior vice president of development, says the unique capabilities of the technology means that the plant could have been configured in any number of ways. With a 180MW turbine, for instance, it could have produced power for 10 hours each day, which was the original intention. With a smaller turbine, and more than 20 hours storage, it could have delivered 50MW of base-load power 24/7.

In the end, Nevada pitched for midday to midnight to suit its needs. In effect, the plant is providing baseload power for a fixed period each day – delivering the benefits of coal-fired power without the downsides, which is of course heavy pollution and an ability to be switched off at will or at regular intervals.

“You can't do that with a coal fired facility,” Georgis says of the Nevada contract. But the technology also allows it to compete with gas-fired generation, both in the ability to provide baseload and as a peaking plant.

Next year, SolarReserve begins construction of the 150MW Rice Solar Energy Plant in Southern California, which will act more like a peaking power station to suit that state's needs. Proposals the company will take to Chile, Australia and the Middle East will likely be for baseload power.

“This should be the winning technology. It has all the attributes you looking for to displace conventional

generation,” Georgis says. “It's not just fulfilling renewable energy targets, you are displacing any new build fossil plants – from nuclear, gas and coal. This is going to change the discussion in energy markets, certainly around the idea that renewables are variable.”

Georgis says there is a lot of confusion about storage and what it means. He says the way to think about it is in the amount of electricity produced by a solar tower plant over a year. With the standard ‘S-Class’ configuration of the plant, the design being built at Tonopah, the plant can produce over 500GWh of electricity a year in strong solar locations such as Western Australia and the Southwest USA. That can be sliced and diced whichever way a customer – be it a utility, industrial group or a miner – chooses. And that can be in 24/7 baseload, delivering electricity at specific times of the day as in Nevada, or as a peaking plant.

“We are not just a renewable energy generator, we can integrate and help firm and shape other variable energy sources,” Georgis says. “It will run in summer for 16-18 hours a day. But I can turn down the turbine and run it 24/7 if the utility asks me to do so.”

The Crescent Dunes plant will not be the first of its type, but it will be the biggest to date, and the first built to what Georgis describes as “utility scale”.

—www.reneweconomy.com.au

continued from page 7

GOTU KOLA: DIGGING DEEPER

I was enjoying the June–August issue and spotted Alanna's 'Living in Fowl Times' article mentioning herbal remedies using Gotu kola (*Centella asiatica*), native to Asia, the Pacific and Australia.

I had been having troubles with a weedy creeping plant in my vegie gardens and lawn. The article photo matched my pest exactly so I started to think more kindly towards it. However, doing some online research it appears that the photo is of a *Hydrocotyl* species, probably *H. bonariensis*, a South American plant that has been naturalised in most states of Australia, particularly near the coast. There was some confusion in the information and photos online but I found 'NSW Flora Online' at NSW Botanic Gardens (<http://plantnet.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au>) and a Gotu kola blog on www.gardenweb.com.au very helpful. Another species, *H. ranunculoides*, is a declared noxious water weed in NSW.

The main differences in the leaves are the larger, peltate leaf (stalk comes from under leaf) in *H. bonariensis*, and the kidney-shaped, smaller leaf in *C. asiatica*.

The pharmacology of *H. bonariensis* could be quite different to Gotu Kola and may require some care! It is also invasive from my own experience.

Tony Yates, Morisset Park, NSW

Hi Tony, thanks very much for sharing your research with us and alerting us to this. I'm sure other readers will find it helpful.

— Fiona

AUTOMATIC SEED SPACER

Dear *Earth Garden*,

I wanted to make a seed hole dibber for consistent seed hole spacing and depth for my vegie patch. I had



Peter's automatic seed spacing and planting invention.

been racking my brain as to what simple way there might be of having some sort of cone shaped object to achieve a seed hole for planting out the smaller vegie seeds. Then I saw the sauce bottle in the cupboard and the penny dropped!

It is made from three bottle necks from fruit juice bottles which are super-glued onto a piece of perspex which is then screwed onto a piece of wood to act as a handle.

I simply hold the wooden piece in my hand, push the cones into the soil, upside down of course, and then take the whole thing away and I am left with three nicely spaced seed holes about four inches (10cm) apart and about an inch (2.5cm) deep. For planting a long row, I simply push the end cone into a previous hole and just keep pushing down into the soil and voila — inch-deep holes at four inches apart for the length of the row. I have used this for carrots, beans, silverbeet, cabbages, broccoli. It makes it much easier for thinning out, uses a bit less seed and works really well.

Peter Howarth

EG'S TERMITE POLICY?

Dear EG

At the age of 55 I have read your magazine from the early '70s and found it very informative. I have mostly lived in a city (Sydney/Brisbane/Bundaberg ...) but I now live in

Dorrigo, NSW, on 10 acres. I am a ticketed carpenter and welder and as a fully-licensed pest controller I guess I'm the 'enemy' for

most of your readers.

I worked for many years with several pest companies and I think I could make more money from writing a book on how not to be ripped off by pest controllers than doing pest work!

While many are fair dinkum and do an honest job, there are many more who are not.

I recently found a few old copies of EG from my local library with several termite problem answers that I hope have been updated.

What is EG's current idea of termite control?

In Dorrigo there are plenty of mudbrick homes but, while I think this building method is still a great idea, unless they are done properly with a common sense approach, they just end up a termite condo!

I am interested in what your latest idea is on this subject. Thanks for your time and great mag.

Bernie McClafferty, Dorrigo, NSW

Hi Bernie,

A big question, and EG doesn't have a policy on anything really — just a desire to help people have a healthy and happy life while conserving and protecting the natural world as much as possible. I personally have come to greatly admire termites — the Mastetermes species we get here in the Kimberley are truly amazing — the earthworms of the north. I have owned two houses in Broome that have been badly attacked by termites. My conclusion now is that regular inspection is the best form of defence. Without regular inspection you can spend a fortune on nasty chemicals, or you can get your house eaten, or both. Also, we now never have garden beds next to the house. We surround our house with a white gravel barrier (sounds ugly, but it's not). We also make sure there are no pathways for the termites to travel across the gravel and become interested in our house. I agree with you that many, many owner-built muddies were constructed

without proper planning to prevent-ing termite attack. We've had another benefit of close observation of termites in our vegie garden. When the termites find a pile of palm mulch to move into, Judith sprinkles blood and bone. This attracts the big, bitey meat ants who go to war with the termites, carrying them off to their nest — it's amazing to watch.

After seven years in our house, which is full of recycled timber, we haven't seen any evidence of termites, nor have we had any spraying done. Hope my ideas meet with your approval!

— Alan

ART FOR CHOOKS' SAKE

Hello,
I just wanted to share my 'ban cage eggs' artwork (below) with your magazine. All proceeds from my art go to animal rescue groups in Australia. The exposure will hopefully help spread the word about caged hens. All my chook artwork can be seen at <http://www.redbubble.com/people/edge-of-dreams/collections/54761-hens>. Mia



Don't forget that you can link up with like-minded Earth Gardeners, share recipes, gardening tips, photos, read articles and catch up with loads of news and events — on The Path website. Just go to www.earthgarden.com.au and click the link. Membership is easy and free. Plus you can find 'Earth Garden' and 'Back Yard Farmer' on Facebook.



Just wait till those apples are scrapped!

APPLE CRUSHER WANTED

Hi all,
First time writer, long time reader. I would like to tell you about our bumper cider apple crop this season, loads of baby apples. Now if we can just keep the birds, possums, bats, rats and coddling moths away, we might be toasting each other with a fine drop come next winter. If any readers know of anyone selling new or second-hand apple crushers (scratters) would love to hear from

you loom@alphalink.com.au. The apples in the pic are Yarlington Mill, a fine old traditional English variety.
Suze, Mitcham, VIC

FIRST EG IN YEPPON

Dear Earth Garden,
Earth Garden 164 invites its readers to tell of how they first met Earth Garden. Well, it must be close to thirty years ago that I first saw a stack of back numbers of Earth Garden in a shop in Yeppoon run by a lady with alternative living style leanings. I borrowed the magazines one or two at a time and found that Earth Garden agreed with much of my thinking. Subscribed, contributed occasionally and must, I think, have read every issue. I look forward to it in the post and am one of those irritated readers without a garden. No shortage of ground but you cannot plant a garden and share it with cattle and I am camped in a big — and I do mean big — three-sided tin shed on a cattle property. About the only vegetative activity I can get away with is raising mustard and cress and sprouting mung beans.

Weakness and weariness, due as much as anything to having been born towards the end of November in 1923 does nothing to help me work, and there is little I can do to help those who do have the energy to work save offer advice.

John E Guest, Rockhampton, QLD

PORT MACQUARIE ADVICE

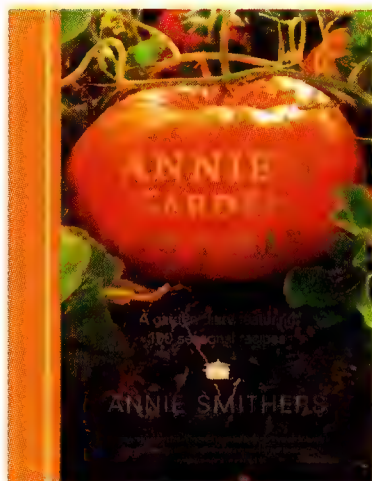
Dear Earth Garden,
We are interested in buying a property towards Port Macquarie in areas like Johns River, Kendle, Comboyne, Diamond Head, but we have never been down that way before. If someone could please write to us to tell us what the areas are like and possible price, we would be so grateful.

Thanks a lot. All letters will be answered.

B & S Middleton, 94 Union Street,
Yarram, Vic 3971

Earth Garden REVIEWS

EDITED BY JUDITH GRAY



ANNIE'S GARDEN TO TABLE

A GARDEN DIARY FEATURING 100
SEASONAL RECIPES

By Annie Smithers

Photography by Simon Griffiths

Published by Lantern

Hard cover, full colour, 249 pages
\$49.95

This is very much a down-to-earth recipe book. It is obvious that Annie's passion for seasonal produce is at the heart of each recipe. A love for the outdoors, gardening and the variation each season brings, shines on every beautiful page.

How pleasurable it is to explore gardening notes alongside recipes. Annie Smithers is an acclaimed chef and restaurateur. She lives, gardens and cooks in Kyneton, in central Victoria. Stephanie Alexander says, "A meal prepared by Annie will always be

honest rather than tricky." What better way to keep a meal honest than by growing the raw materials yourself!

This collection of recipes is diverse and classic, certainly not only for the vegetarian. Each chapter reviews a month in the garden, looking at what the garden was able to produce and what sumptuous dishes arose from the raw inspiration. Any gardener will know that success is not always inevitable. Annie writes about her experience in a very personal and honest way. Often there is a note of angst when a continuous supply of produce is needed for the restaurant.

September brings spring cheer and Roast Duck with Seville Orange Glaze. Then follows Bread and Butter Pudding with Seville Marmalade. September in central Victoria presents many climatic challenges, as well as possible locust plagues and floods, but the joy of blossom on the apricot trees and watercress salad makes it all worthwhile.

This book is a photographic delight that any vegie gardener will relish. Rich soil sprouting vibrant green seedlings alongside beautifully prepared and presented dishes. Geese, chickens and a little red tractor all make this a very personal journey through a year of small scale farming. Truly inspiring recipes and a thorough documentation of an enormous learning curve. A brave achievement.



BIRDS OF AUSTRALIA

DK NATURE GUIDE

By David Burnie

Australian Consultant David
Andrew

Published by DK
Soft cover, full colour,
travel format, 352 pages
\$29.99

This is a wonderfully compact and comprehensive guide to over 400 species of Australian birds. Start with the anatomy of birds, look at flight and migration, habitats and how to identify birds in the field.

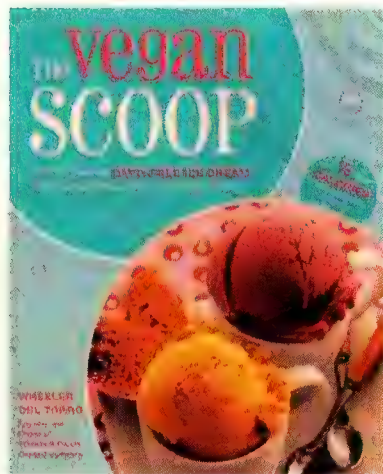
Each species is listed by family group. Information includes family name, map of distribution and a detailed description of characteristics. All this makes for an excellent field guide.

It is astounding just how many species of birds we have in Australia.

Gamebirds, mound builders, penguins, albatross, storks, boobies, bustards, doves and pigeons, bee eaters, kingfishers, honeyeaters, parrots, birds of prey and many more.

This is a most detailed presentation.

The thing that sets this book apart is the spectacular photography. Such vivid pictures make this an excellent field guide for beginners.



THE VEGAN SCOOP

150 RECIPES FOR DAIRY-FREE ICE CREAM

By Wheeler Del Torro

Published by Fair Winds Press

Soft cover, full colour, 240 pages

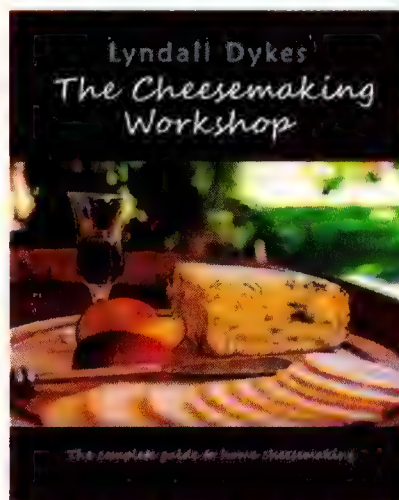
\$24.95*

This book is about good health, good taste and simplicity. Food lover and self-made vegan ice cream guru, Wheeler Del Torro shares his recipes and enthusiasm for frozen desserts. Wheeler started his business selling vegan ice cream out of a 1972 ice cream truck at festivals. He now owns Boston's first vegan ice cream parlour.

Makes sense if you read the recipes. He uses a very simple ice cream mix, based on soy milk and arrowroot as a thickening agent. Once you have the custard sorted, the possibilities are endless.

Wheeler starts by introducing you to the ingredients as well as to the churning methods. It is necessary to churn your ice cream as it freezes to prevent crystals and produce a smooth texture. How I would love an electric churn!

Now the flavours. Wheeler obviously enjoys experimenting. He starts with the classics but moves through fruity, Asian, Caribbean and novelty, and ends up in the aphrodisiacal corner. Coconut and lemongrass or chocolate martini sorbet doesn't sound too bad. You will also find two chapters on toppings, sauces and sides. I was a little concerned to see the use of corn syrup (doesn't he know corn syrup is causing obesity?) I guess it is an American publication. That said, Wheeler has sold it to me and I am going to give the Vegan Scoop a go.



THE CHEESEMAKING WORKSHOP

THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO HOME CHEESEMAKING

By Lyndall Dykes

Published by The Cheesemaking Workshop

Full colour, A4 spiral bound,

250 pages

\$57.95*

Here's an Australian, spiral-bound

guide to making your own cheeses at home. Lyndall is vegetarian and cheese has always been part of her diet. She believes very strongly in letting everyone know just how simple it is to make cheese at home. She's committed to reclaiming this art, reducing costs, and giving it back to the people — much like the urban food growing movement.

It's thought that cheesemaking dates back to 12,000 BC — there's even evidence of it on the walls of tombs in ancient Egypt. You will be amazed at how cost effective home cheesemaking is.

I like the fact that this book is spiral bound so you can find your spot easily and rest it open on your kitchen bench. More than just how to make the cheeses, Lyndall's book also includes recipes that show you how to use the cheese you've made. Try stuffed flat breads, tarts and spinach and fetta roulade.

Lyndall begins by explaining the starter cultures. There are many cultures but Lyndall uses four basic types, depending on the cheese you want to make.

All very clearly set out and explained.

The cheeses range from soft like Camembert, and blue vein through to fetta, haloumi, and ricotta to cheddar and four types of goats' cheese. The recipes include heaps of detailed step-by-step photos. It's even possible to use vegetarian rennet — made from the sap of fig trees — in these recipes.

The variety of cheeses that can be made at home from this one book astounds me!

***Books marked with an asterisk are available from the Good Life Book Club
Ph: (03) 5424 1814.**

Earth Garden

UNCLASSIFIEDS

Unclassifieds are \$1.20 (including GST) per word prepaid. This cost now includes your advertisement on the *Earth Garden* website at www.earthgarden.com.au for three months. Bookings for the DECEMBER 2013 issue should arrive at PO Box 2 Trentham, 3458, or www.earthgarden.com.au by 12 noon, 30 OCTOBER 2013 (Secure payment by credit card is also available at the website.)

HOME STONE FLOUR MILLS – WHEAT GRASS JUICERS. Mill your own Stone ground wholemeal flour for Cakes and Bread at with a Retsel Little Ark stone flour mill. Start juicing WHEAT GRASS JUICE at home. Visit www.retsel.com.au. "Endorsed by Housewives' Association." Write for catalogue: P.O. Box 712, Dandenong 3175, enclose 3 postage stamps. Ph: (03) 9795 2725. Distributors enquiries welcome.

HOME EDUCATION. For information send SSAE to Home Education Network, PO Box 461, Daylesford, 3460. Website: www.home-ed.vic.edu.au. Phone: (03) 9517 7107.

ANIMAL NATUROPATHY - GREENPET. Herbal and homeopathic remedies, nutritional supplements, non-toxic shampoos and much more. Mail-order catalogue Australia wide. Distance consultations also available. 244 Verrierdale Rd, Verrierdale, Qld, 4562. Ph: (07) 5449 1453, Fax: (07) 5449 1463. Email: info@greenpet.com.au. Web site: <http://www.greenpet.com.au>.

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ECO BUILDING ADVICE for home retrofits/additions in Adelaide, SA. Frugal designs, plans for Councils ... 35 years experience. Ph: Jack (08) 8261 9049 www.jmetcalf.net.

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UNICORN ARCHITECTURE AND CONSTRUCTION. Design and build beautiful, sustainable and energy efficient homes for living. Ph: Daylesford (03) 5348 1298. Email: info@unicornhouse.com.au Website: <http://www.unicornhouse.com.au>.

GOURDS, SEEDS, BOOKS AVAILABLE NOW! In our new catalogue. Send 4 stamps to: The Gourd Father, PO Box 298 EG, East Maitland, 2323. <www.thegourdfather.com.au> Special Offer! Book on growing and drying gourds plus 2 pkts seeds mixed, 1 sml and 1 lrg plus free catalogue \$31.90 includes PandH and GST.

STRAWBALE BUILDING WORKSHOPS. Comprehensive strawbale and earthen plaster building workshops, Daylesford. Ring for dates or check website. Learn how you too can build easily, environmentally, and affordably. Don O'Connor and Sue Ewart (see EG 101 and 105). Visit on our Web site: www.gentleearthwalking.com.au. Phone: (03) 5348 7506.

TIPIS by Don O'Connor. Tipis made to order by experienced and caring builder. Also available Tipi Camping: retreats and holidays — Daylesford. Now making Aboriginal whurlies. Phone: (03) 5348 7506 or write to PO Box 395, Daylesford, Vic. 3460.

WOOD FIRED OVEN WORKSHOPS (as featured in '*Back Yard Ovens*'). For full details and future workshop dates and venues – www.woodfiredovenworkshops.com.

GIVE YOUR NEWS to Michel and Jude via www.seedsavers.net. See news of their seed travels.

156 ISSUES OF EARTH GARDEN magazine, only 7 missing from entire set. \$300 ONO. brianreneephillips@bigpond.com.

SHORT STAY country accommodation/comfortable cabin for couples 27km Mudgee. Solar electricity, composting toilet, gas hot water/cooking. 25 acre part bush block/bird life/roos. Reasonable rates, no pets/smoking. Info Rick 02 6374 2392.

BIOLET COMPOSTING WATERLESS TOILET new cost \$3300 sell \$1200. Phone (02) 4954 8424.

FULL-TIME & PART-TIME GARDENER required for Organic farm at Holbrook NSW. Experienced, energetic, couple to maintain homestead garden & lawns, manage

hot-house, grow vegetables on large scale, maintain garden & tree irrigation. Horticulture or permaculture experience an advantage. Partner will assist with gardening & some occasional housekeeping duties. Accommodation on-farm. Email resume to frank@johnstons.com.au.

BEGINNERS STONE/FEATURE WALL COURSE. Sept 24, 26 evenings. Sept 28-29 all day. Accommodation available. Kallista Vic. www.forestedgestone.com.au or catherine@chestnut-hill.com.au.

STONE FOR SALE. Reclaimed hand-squared sandstone blocks. New Zealand Oamaru limestone and reclaimed hand-carved architectural detailed stone. Ideal for retaining, feature walls and garden ornaments. Supplier of hand split sandstone pavers. Paul 0412 812 144.

SUPPRESSED & UNUSUAL TECHNOLOGIES CATALOGUE free energy devices, anti-gravity, hydrogen fuel, alternate fuels and engines, 200+ Topics. www.lostecharchive.com.

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LANDLINES

LAND LINES are for people buying, selling, seeking or sharing houses and land. It is your responsibility to check all deals. We charge a rate of \$30.00 plus \$1.20 per word (which includes a colour photograph, if supplied) – prepaid – for a listing of any desired length (additional photos are \$30 each). Your advertisement and photograph are printed in *Earth Garden* and are now also displayed on our website at www.earthgarden.com.au for three months. Digital photos reproduce better than prints — please ensure that your photo is

at least 800 pixels on the longer side. All LAND LINES should include your name and address (phone number and email address are optional). Please also name the distance to your nearest large town (eg, "50 km north east of Lismore"). LAND LINES for the DECEMBER 2013 issue should arrive at PO Box 2 Trentham, 3458, or www.earthgarden.com.au by 12 noon, 30 OCTOBER 2013 (Secure payment by credit card is also available at the website.) We simply cannot take LAND LINES over the phone — please don't try.

NEW SOUTH WALES



1. WOMBEYAN CAVES HIDEAWAY – 148 acres of undulating to hilly country with spectacular 360 degree views. 180 km from Sydney, 75 km from Mittagong. For SALE \$285 000. New two bedroom cottage with cathedral ceilings, open plan living, slow combustion stove, small solar system (lights, TV), gas fridge, landline phone, composting toilet, 40,000 litre tank water, several sheds. Small orchard (apples, pears, quince, figs, olives). Abundant wildlife. Paddocks suit horses. One owner for 30 years, reluctant sale. Call Emma on (02) 9818 5720. SEE PHOTOS ABOVE.

2. SOUTH COAST. Great climate 80 acres, warm in winter no frost, cool in summer. Lovely views from this

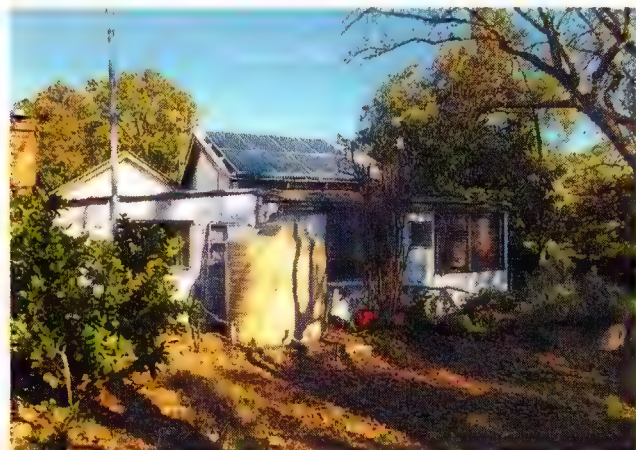


property with three comfortable buildings, mud brick and stone artist studio. Wood fire, gas stove, flush and earth toilets. Perfectly situated for additional building. 240v solar, phone mobile and internet. Enclosed organic vegie garden needs attention. Very peaceful, private road, close to town. 3 mins to school bus at local historic Nethercote, Pambula and Eden 12 km. Glorious dams, water lilies, many rain water tanks. Friendly wildlife. Includes 2 containers, some household furniture, garden shed implements and Honda wagon (all optional) owner going overseas. Contact 0478 795 719. SEE PHOTO ABOVE.



3. MAYRUNG, between Deniliquin and Finley. 117 acres, 10 paddocks, electric fencing, laneways, all lasered with recycle dam. Mud brick home, wide verandas, 3 bedrooms, high ceilings, renovated kitchen, older bathroom, slow combustion heater, evaporative cooler, 4-bay shed.

44 megalitres water entitlement, channel water all year round, 2-inch loopline for stock water and spray irrigation with turf valves every 50 metres in each paddock. 2.4 ha tree plantation under drip irrigation. Certified organic (NASAA) since 2008, emphasis on biological soil health. \$300,000. Phone 0427 198 131. **SEE PHOTO <<.**

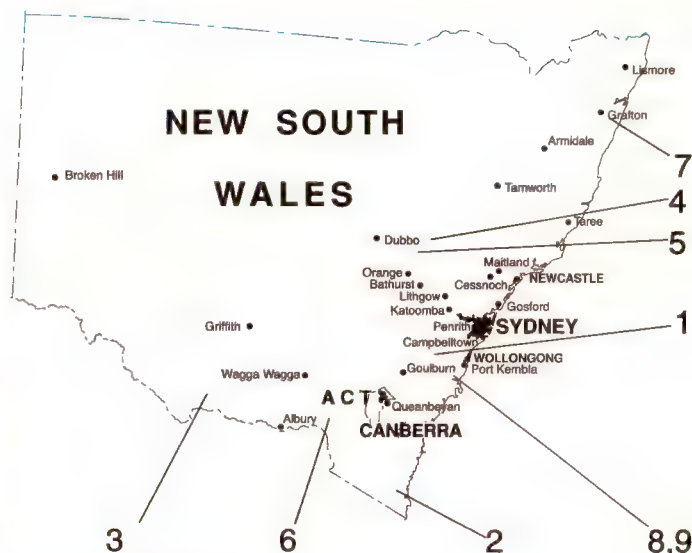


4. HISTORIC GULGONG NSW. Rare find older style home 1 and 3/4 acre in CBD potential sub division 3 brs, composting toilet, solar grid electricity, organic garden. \$345,000. 02 6374 1029. **SEE PHOTO ABOVE.**



5. MUDGEES. 27 km Mudgee 25 acre part bush block rendered home Besser block 2/br plus loft, composting toilet, solar/grid electricity plus separate self contained weekender. Beautiful garden, veg patch, chook run, dam & tank water. \$395,000. 02 6374 2392. **SEE PHOTO ABOVE.**

6. TUMBARUMBA 50 ACRES. A special slice of magic in the mountains. Secluded property only 3 km from a thriving rural township, schools, hospital. Unique 3-bedroom home with loads of character, north-facing aspect. Large stand-alone 48V solar system with generator backup. Solar hot water, slow combustion stove and heating, gas cooktop and heating. Sheds and workshop, rainwater tanks with 96,000litre capacity, 2 dams. Tar sealed road within 30m of property entrance. Mobile phone and wifi connections. \$380,000. Email marway1952@gmail.com



or 0417686561. **SEE PHOTO ABOVE.**



7. NORTHERN NSW. 5 ACRES of land. Freehold in Pillar Valley (20 minutes to town and beaches). Barn style house, double carport, 3 bay garage, 4 dams, Chaffin Creek frontage, north east passive solar design, building entitlement, previous Envirofund project, composting toilet, dual hot water (solar and wood combustion), school bus, rubbish collection, phone, water, wildlife,

pristine surf beaches close by. Phone: Hughie, 0412 943 771, hughieotoole@hotmail.com Was \$250k, now \$190k. SEE PHOTO <<.



8. 50 LILLY PILLY LANE TAPITALLEE. There are two options here! Option 1: 71 acres with a beautiful mix of rainforest pockets and naturally timbered land. You will love exploring the caves, gullies and small waterfalls, not to mention the wide variety of native wildlife. The property is only a short walk to the Tapitallee Eco Retreat and adjacent to Bangalee Reserve. The main residence is made up of two carriages joined by a large central living area. There are five bedrooms in total. There is plenty of storage with a large open shed with another train carriage in its centre. Another carriage studio separate from the main residence with views over Cambewarra Mountain, which is a potential additional income as a rental. Price \$620,000. Option 2: A private 4.5 acres building block in timbered surroundings. Both properties 10 minutes drive to North Nowra and within 30 minutes drive to Jervis Bay, Berry & Kangaroo Valley. Price \$330,000. Call Jared Cochrane 0404 210 824. <http://www.raineandhorne.com.au/properties/189824>. SEE PHOTO ABOVE.



9. UNIQUE COTTAGE – SUSTAINABLE LIVING. This enchanting mud brick cottage gives you the opportunity to live sustainably in a rural setting with all modern comforts. Generating more electricity than it uses (feeding into the grid) this cottage offers cool in summer and cosy in winter. Built in 2005, the cottage stands on its own block of land

(Torrens title) next to a dam and shares an additional 9 acres (community title) with eight neighbouring properties. With no fences there is all the room you could want plus fresh veggies and eggs from the garden/chook pen and use of a swimming pool. Beautiful bush walks and microclimates in open forest and gullies. A unique organic design, the cottage has 2 good size bedrooms with ensuite bathrooms feeding into a grey water effluent system. There is a third bedroom/office upstairs, a modern kitchen/dining room with gas cooking, a wood fire heater with small oven, deck areas, a garden of native shrubs with bird-life and visiting wildlife rife, a garden shed with shelving and a large backup generator. There is additional storage in the roof space if needed. Jo's Cottage, 52 Lilly Pilly Lane, Tapitallee (nr Cambewarra), NSW 2540 2.5 hrs south of Sydney 11 km north of Nowra. W: <http://www.accsoft.com.au/~jevans> for more photos. E: jevans@accsoft.com.au. Ph: 0411 500 621. \$375,000. SEE PHOTO <<.

QUEENSLAND



1. HOUSE FOR SALE WITH 125 ACRES overlooking beautiful Swanfels Valley 2 hours Brisbane, 20 mins Warwick, 5 mins Yangan. Four carpeted bedrooms, main with walk-in robe, two with built-ins. Tiled open-plan living area with slow combustion heater, modern kitchen, slow combustion stove with hot water, 1 bathroom with separate toilet and vanity area, large laundry, plenty cupboards, 52,000 litres rainwater to house, established native garden, three 9x6m sheds, two with power, 5 megalitre water licence, secluded position with magnificent views. \$499,000. Enquiries 0409 266 041. SEE PHOTO ABOVE.

2. HEAVEN ON EARTH. This amazing 10.24 acre property has a long frontage to the head waters of the Bremer River and many years have gone into planting literally thousands of native trees including rainforest species. Abundant water is provided by the river and an equipped bore as well as copious tank water storage. Wildlife is abundant, peace and serenity prevails. Enthusiastic nature loving owners

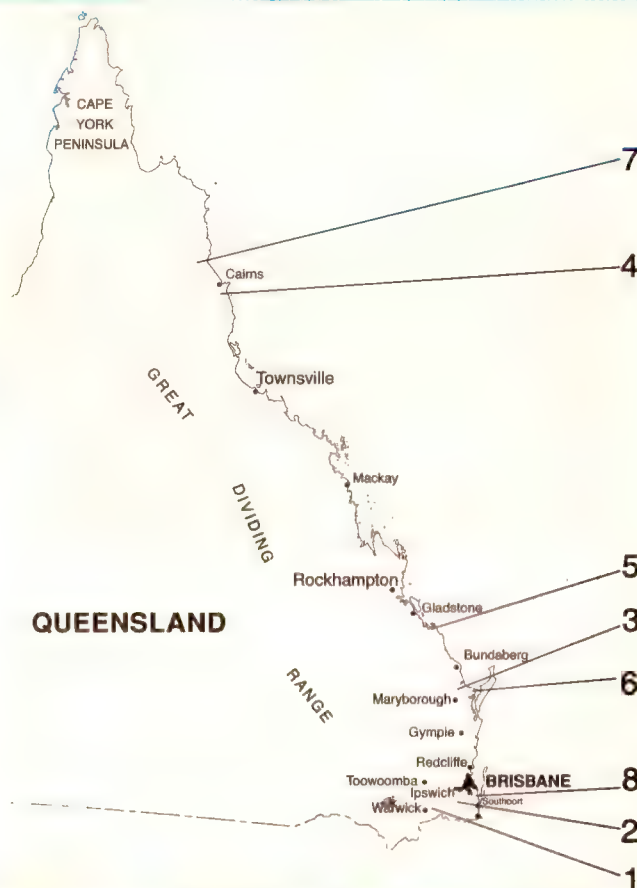


have done all the hard work but they now have to move on. Some lucky family can reap the benefits. The dwelling is of low-set timber and hardieplank construction and stands on steel stumps. Floor layout comprises the usual format with two bedrooms and open plan living area. Solar power is in place. A very large steel framed shed provides car accommodation, workshop and storage facility. There is no other quite like this property on the market in this district. Jon King Pty Ltd Real Estate - Boonah 07 5463 2700 – 0409 051 008. SEE PHOTO ABOVE.



3. THREE BEDROOM 240 square metre house on picturesque 100 acres. 15 min from Childers. 60 mins from 3 cities, one coastal. 3 dams, 15 x 9 m shed and ready to use stock infrastructure. \$399K. More details and photos at <http://naturesrest.webs.com>. Phone: Margaret 0447 261 306. E-mail: pandora71@bigpond.com. SEE PHOTO ABOVE.

4. BEAUTIFUL, TROPICAL TIMBER POLE HOME in Goldsborough with lovely views and constant breezes, set on one usable acre, tropical gardens with fruit trees. Spacious living area with cathedral ceilings, 4 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, huge kitchen, polished timber floors throughout. Plenty of undercover space for cars, etc. This area is of legal height and if needed could be enclosed to create additional rooms. As new furniture could be included. Peaceful and private, with the convenience of Gordonvale town only 7 minutes away or Cairns 35



minutes. School bus at front door, all town services. \$475,000 Ph: 07 4770 1701. Email: susanne_sch_m@yahoo.com. SEE PHOTO ABOVE.

5. DEEPWATER – 25 km south of Agnes Water, 6 km from beautiful beaches, 10 km to National Park, 16 ha of northern-facing slope encompassing crest of Matchbox Range. 83m above sea level with ocean views and cooling sub tropical sea breezes. Massive stand alone solar system, 2 dams, partially cleared, orchard, Permaculture design, large timber sheds, hardwood deck, buses, caravans, compost toilet, 22,000 litre water tank. Owner wishes to purchase large motor home thus priced to sell to right buyer.



\$252,525. 0438 566 266 mark_driscoll@bigpond.com. SEE PHOTO ABOVE.



6. HERVEY BAY, 3 BEDROOM brick and tile home, 772 m2, insulated, solar-hot-water, solar-power, rainwater-tank, wood-pizza-oven, productive organic garden: tropical fruit and nut-trees, 60+ perennial edibles, annuals and ornamentals, short walk to beach, creek, medical-, childcare- and shopping-centre. \$275,000. chrisasholz@hotmail.com. SEE PHOTO ABOVE.

7. DAINTREE RAINFOREST. Imagine if there was a magical place so private that you feel as if you were suspended above the canopy of the Daintree Rainforest - tree tops in every direction (360 degrees). It sounds like a fairytale doesn't it? Most families have a trampoline. We have a "sky deck" - an 18 metre platform perched above the rainforest canopy (including solar panels, satellite dish for broadband and a TV aerial, supported by a galvanised



steel free-standing tower. The view from the tower will forever remain because our home is built in a World Heritage Conservation Zone. Surrounded by diverse tropical lowland vegetation, rich bird fauna, including Cassowaries, Victoria Riflebirds, Wompoo pigeons and special mammals including the Musky Rat Kangaroo and Striped Possums. The recently renovated house has three bedrooms and comes with many ecologically friendly features. All this just minutes from a primary school and local shop. You are one hour from Mossman and two hours drive north of James Cook University, (Cairns Campus). Visit TheRealEstateHelpers.com.au/Daintree-House or call Lloyd on 1300helper for price and inspection instructions. SEE PHOTO ABOVE.



8. RUSSELL ISLAND. PEACEFUL, BUSH SETTING, 2 bedroom cottage. Fully furnished. 12 volt ceiling lights, solar power on grid, gas hot water, double garage. Passenger ferry and car barge to mainland. 40 km south of Brisbane. \$165,000. Mobile: 0419 502 189. SEE PHOTO ABOVE.

VICTORIA



1. 1.5 ACRE BUSH BLOCK. Planning permit approved to build a 3 bedroom home. Beautiful aspect, rolling hills surrounded by farmland. Driveway cut, house site cleared, basic weekender hut. Lancefield (11 km) Kilmore (14 km) 1 hour Melbourne \$150,000. Jacqui 0410 569 305 or jaccampbell@hotmail.com. SEE PHOTO ABOVE.



2. BEAUTIFUL 3 BEDROOM MUDBRICK HOUSE. Extensive shedding including large chook shed and yard. Solar power, passive solar design. 22 acres Permaculture designed. 4 km Wedderburn 75 km Bendigo. \$280,000. Phone Janet 0409 999 722 for further information and inspection. SEE PHOTOS ABOVE.

3. SIMPLE, QUIET, AFFORDABLE – Lifestyle, 15 km north of Clunes, Vic. This 10 acre 'Eco' property features a two



storey main dwelling with panoramic views, 135,000 litres of rain water tanks, full solar, 24 x 9m shed, a 200 square metre vegie patch, over 30 fruit trees and a self contained eco studio for visitors. Please visit www.thegoodmove.com.au for more information. SEE PHOTO ABOVE.

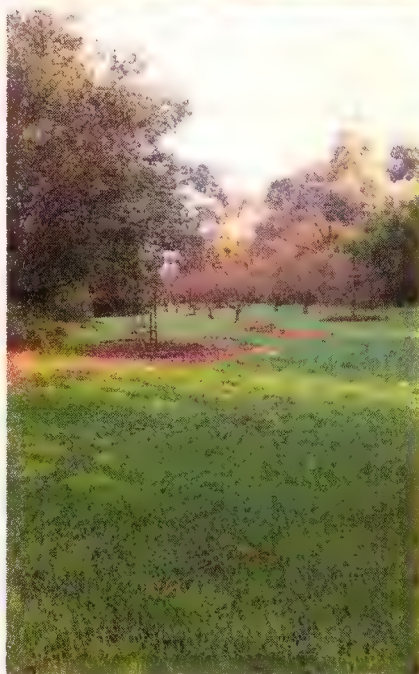
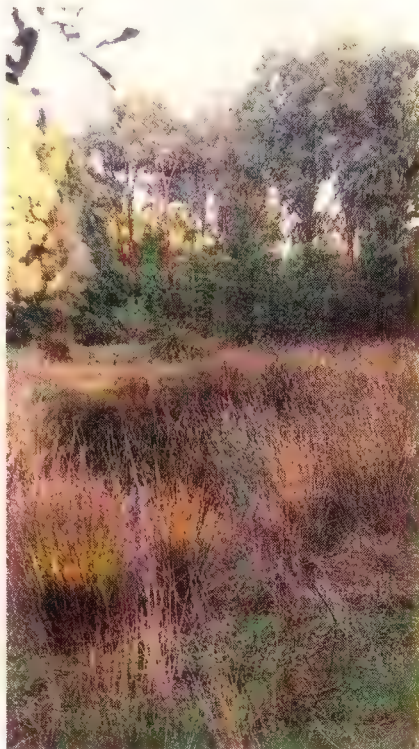


4. PHEASANT CREEK nestled in the Kinglake Ranges just 1 hour North of Melbourne. This five acre property has a cosy, well positioned three bedroom weatherboard house, solar hot water, wood stove, over 130,000 litre water storage

and a valuable 2 megalitre water licence from permanent running creek at rear of property. Established orchard with over 40 trees and vegetable gardens. Practically fenced for stock and or market gardening. Two large fox-proof chook pens comfortably holding up to 50 chooks. Property backs on to thousands of acres of State forest. Abundant wildlife and trout filled waters. 2 km to general store, bakery and hardware store. Local shops, schools, childcare, library, etc ten minutes drive. \$550,000. Phone 0438 031 374. naturesgrove@yahoo.com.au. **SEE PHOTO <<**

5. SOUTH GIPPSLAND, BOOROOOL.

4 acres of flattish land on ridge at end of 1.5 km gravel road, 10 mins to Leongatha, surrounded by rolling green farmland. Traditional three BR weatherboard house, veranda on 3 ½ sides, wood heater and aircon, recently renovated, new roof, semi-ensuite plus main bathroom, two large living areas. Extensive orchard, 150 fruit trees, many varieties all types: stone, pome, citrus, berries, subtropical, large vegie garden. One acre established indigenous bush, resident koalas, abundant birds and frogs, Land for Wildlife property. One dam, 2 x 10,000 gallon tanks, huge shed, chook pen, greenhouse, arboretum and



three paddocks. Peaceful and private, with stunning views. \$395K-\$410K. Email: rasdan49@gmail.com. **SEE 3 PHOTOS <<^**



6. BON ACCORD: 40 ACRES OF BUSH, with olive grove and stone house in native garden setting. Mt Gambier stone house with 3 bedrooms, open plan lounge/dining area with open fire, feature jarrah doors and spiral staircase. Kitchen has a slow combustion stove plus gas cooktop with griller. Solar hot water boosted by wood stove. Spa sized bath, inside toilet with septic system. Approx 36,000L house water tanks. Separate artist/writers' studio over stone garage. Carport and large lockable Colorbond shed with concrete floor & power. 95,000L water storage for approx. Small olive grove of 225 trees with underground irrigation system. Current "Land for Wildlife" accredited (kangaroos, goannas & echidnas visit). 15 km east of Stawell, 1/2 hour from Halls Gap or Ararat, 2 1/2 hours from Melbourne. \$320,000. Contact Matt 0412 327 519. **SEE PHOTO ABOVE.**

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

1. MT BARKER, WA. Idyllic, peaceful elevated 12.4 ha (30 acres) Organic Certified A conservation block 12 km from Mt Barker and 7 km from Kendenup village in the Great Southern Region of WA. Spectacular views to the Stirling Ranges and to the Porongurup Range. 40 minutes to Albany and the coast, 4 hours south of Perth. Amazing



spring wildflowers and many uncommon and endangered flower, tree and animal species. Two bedroom, one bathroom steel framed, timber and iron, fully insulated house, mains power, reverse cycle air conditioner, underground grey water system. 2.5 ha netted orchards and berries - prune plums, old variety apples, pears, cherries, olives, chestnuts, apricots, almonds, raspberries, silvanberries. Also cultivated areas for vegetables and garlic. Gardens contain rare and old roses and exotic trees. 3000 cubic metre irrigation dam, 2 x 50,000l tanks, 2 x 2500l

tanks, orchard and gardens fully irrigated. Tractor and utility and other farm equipment can be included in sale. \$420,000 negotiable. Contact R. and J Leahy (08) 9851 4230. E. rjleahy@skymesh.com.au. **SEE PHOTOS <<**



2. SWAN VALLEY. Mellow mud brick house, passive solar design, 3 hectares river loam on banks of Swan River, 30 mins from Perth CBD. Beautiful location, very fruitful established property with panoramic views, wine grapes, olive grove, fruit and macadamia trees, cottage, sheds. \$1.75 million. Phone Margaret 08 9296 4826. **SEE PHOTOS ABOVE.**

RENT / SHARE



OLD GROWTH WET SCLEROPHYLL 400 ACRES. 2 bedroom home 37 km to Grafton or Woolgoolga with orchard, creek, dam, tank water, solar, sheds etc. Equipment for maintenance supplied. Available now for one year, \$220 per week. kbutter1008@gmail.com (02) 6649 4531.



TO RENT: SMALL SOLAR POWERED COTTAGE on organic farm, Goongerah, East Gippsland. Suit one or two people looking for a quiet alternate lifestyle, or as a writer's residence. Progressive, eco-friendly community but no TV reception. Shops 70 km away. Established veggie garden goes with the cottage. NBN Satellite broadband possible. 3 1/2 hours from Canberra, 6 hours from Melbourne. \$120 a week (negotiable). Call Jill (03) 5154 0145. **SEE PHOTO ABOVE.**

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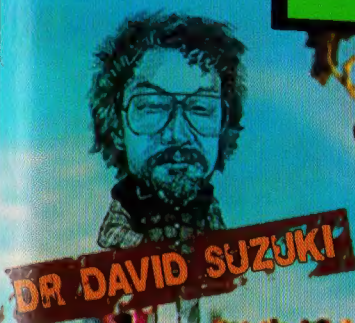
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